DH
DECCAN HERALD
The Power of Good

India seal FIH Women's Pro League ticket

Navneet, Sunelita shine in 2-0 defeat of New Zealand

Page 13

British PM could decide on his political future today

Page 9

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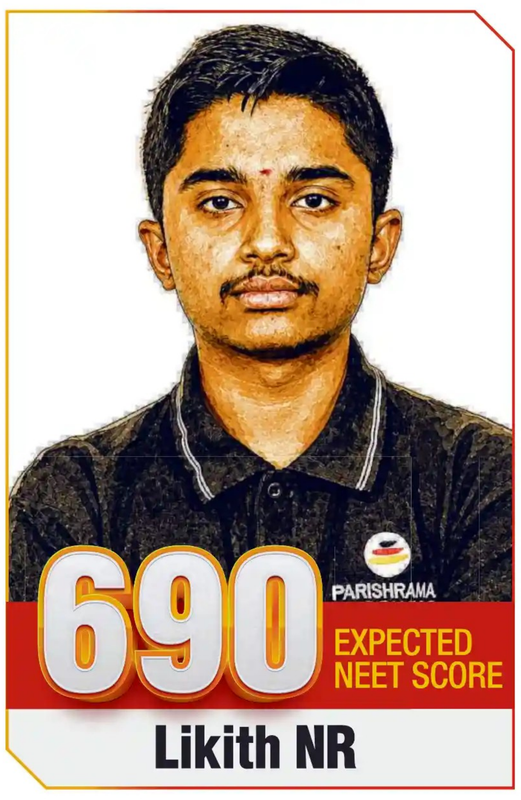

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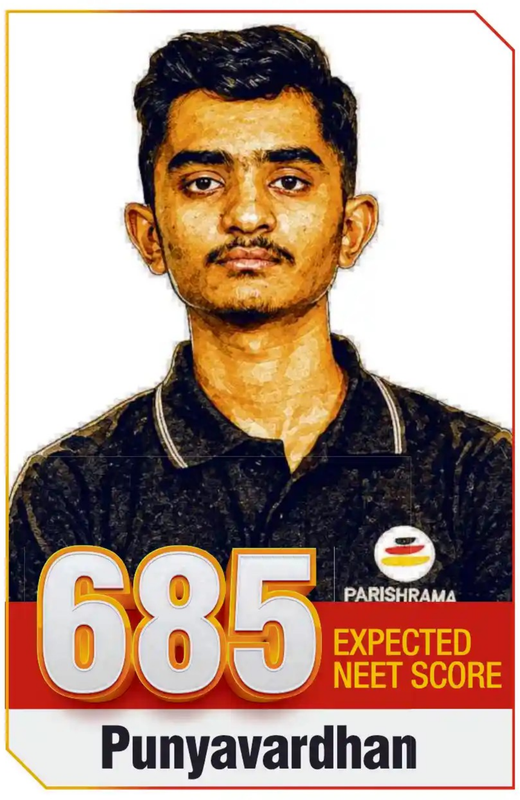

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Live-streams, underground hall: How temples guard offerings

Despite strict rules, irregularities still creep into systems that manage cash, gold & silver

HYDERABAD/CHENNAI/ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM/ MUMBAI, DHNS

Allegations of crores of rupees missing from donations at the Ram Temple in Ayodhya have cast a spotlight on how India's most revered shrines manage the vast sums offered by devotees each year.

A closer look at major temples reveals a patchwork of systems combining surveillance technology, volunteer oversight and strict dress codes designed to ensure accountability. Yet, as recent scandals at Sabarimala and Tirumala show, no system is entirely immune to abuse.

Surveillance at Tirumala

At Tirumala in Andhra Pradesh, home to the world's richest Hindu temple, between 70,000 and 80,000 pilgrims visit the main shrine on an ordinary day, with footfall crossing one lakh during festivals. The offering box, known as the Hundi, receives Rs 3-4 crore daily.

Offerings are moved to the Parakamani building, where advanced machinery counts currency and coins. Screened volunteers — Hindu men aged 35 to 65 from government, banking and insurance backgrounds across Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala — work in three shifts. Dressed in white dhotis and vests, they undergo strict security checks; electronics and valuables are barred, and staff are frisked on exit.

The system has largely held firm, though the CID recently launched a probe into alleged embezzlement by Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) staff.

Transparency in TN

Tamil Nadu's Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (HR&CE) department has established a structured framework governing over 44,000 temples, including the Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple in Madurai, the Arunachaleswarar Temple in Tiruvannamalai and the Kapaleeswarar Temple in Chennai.

Volunteers, selected after a stringent verification process, count donations alongside the temple superintendent, senior officials and an HR&CE assistant commissioner. The entire process is photographed and video-recorded.

"There is transparency everywhere. Once the counting is over, everything is documented, and the money is deposited in the temple's bank account. Gold and silver are also deposited in the bank," a temple trustee in Vellore district told *DH*.

At least 48 senior-grade and 100 Grade I temples live-stream the counting process on YouTube.

Maha underground halls

In Maharashtra, the Shree Sai Baba Sansthan at Shirdi and Mumbai's Shree Siddhivinayak Temple have enforced rigorous procedures for decades.

Shirdi's 43 donation boxes are opened twice a week in a specially designed underground hall under CCTV surveillance. Over 200 participants, including devotees, village representatives, trust employees and bankers, take part.

All are provided collarless, pocketless kurta-pyjamas. Foreign currencies, along with gold and silver, are catalogued separately.

At Siddhivinayak, volunteers count donations every Wednesday under CCTV surveillance.

Vulnerabilities in Kerala

At the Sabarimala Ayyappa temple, which generates an annual revenue of about Rs 350 crore, including Rs 80 crore from offering boxes, hundreds of workers are deployed during the two-month pilgrimage season for real-time manual counting.

Offerings from the main Hundi travel via conveyor belt to the counting centre, where notes are handed directly to bank officials.

Sabarimala has recently been rocked by a scandal. A Kerala High Court-appointed special commissioner flagged procedural violations in the removal of gold-plated coverings from the sanctum sanctorum under the guise of maintenance.

A probe exposed deep-rooted looting involving senior officials. Instances of temple staff concealing offerings on their person were also reported.

Faith and Fraud

Tirumala in Tirupati	Sabarimala Temple	Shirdi Temple	Meenakshi Temple
Tirumala temple sees 70k-80k pilgrims daily; offerings counted under strict security by screened volunteers	Sabarimala records Rs 350 crore annual revenue; manual counting during pilgrimage season	In Shirdi, boxes are opened twice weekly in an underground hall under CCTV cameras in presence of over 200 people	Tamil Nadu HR&CE oversees 44,000 temples; counting process video-recorded

SIT report on Ram Temple fund probe likely today

SANJAY PANDEY
LUCKNOW, DHNS

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the alleged embezzlement of offerings at the Ram Temple in Ayodhya is likely to submit its interim report on Monday.

According to sources, the 150-page report has been completed and may be handed over to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's office. Besides examining the allegations of missing funds, it also suggests measures to improve donation counting and strengthen transparency.

Sources said the SIT is preparing to lodge an FIR in connection with the alleged embezzlement. The role of several functionaries of the Shriram Mandir Teerth Kshetra Trust has been found "suspect", and their names may figure in the FIR.

The three-member SIT, formed on June 13, questioned trust office-bearers, personnel involved in counting cash, bank officials and employees from whom some embezzled money was recovered. The team has been asked to submit its final report within a fortnight.

The team has also instructed its trust and temple functionaries not to leave Ayodhya, according to sources, who claimed that investigators found discrepancies in the documentation of offerings like gold, silver and precious stones. The instruction was issued before they left for Lucknow on Sunday.

DONATION ROW

- Three-member SIT was formed June 13
- 150-page report completed, to be handed to CM Adityanath's office
- FIR likely; role of several trust functionaries found 'suspect'
- Discrepancies found in documentation of gold, silver
- Vital evidence, CCTV footage shows employees pocketing cash offerings

Sources said the SIT had obtained "vital evidence" and CCTV footage that purportedly showed some employees pocketing cash offerings while counting them.

The report, sources added, includes recommendations to strengthen the system, including the removal of certain trust office-bearers and the appointment of a CEO, on the lines of the Kashi Vishwanath Temple in Varanasi.

Five suspects have been identified in connection with the missing funds. They include Ramshankar Yadav alias Tinnu Yadav, Luvkush Mishra, Anukalp Mishra and two others — all of whom were involved in counting the offerings.

Earlier, a police team raided the residence of Luvkush Mishra in Meenapur Thakuran Fagauli village in Ayodhya district and allegedly recovered around Rs 12 lakh.

Rahul meets Punjab leaders amid leadership change buzz

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Congress appears to be moving fast to tie up the loose ends in its Punjab unit, with top leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday holding separate discussions with five senior leaders from the state, amid speculation about a change in state leadership ahead of the Assembly elections early next year.

Charanjit Singh Channi

Amarinder Singh Raja Warring

Rahul's meeting with leaders came a day after Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge held deliberations with him, Congress General Secretary (Organisation) KC Venugopal, state in-charge Bhupesh Baghel and Ajay Maken, who headed a team of three observers who submitted a report assessing the situation in the state.

Factional fights in Punjab unit have intensified with leaders seeking a bigger stake have been at each other's throats. A recent leadership meeting saw sparks flying with Punjab leaders mincing no words in attacking each other even in the presence of Rahul and Kharge.

Rahul met Punjab Congress chief Amarinder Singh Raja Warring, Leader of Opposition in the Punjab Assembly Pratap Singh Bajwa, former state chief minister Charanjit Singh Channi, senior leaders Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa and Vijay Inder Singla. All these have a stake in the state leadership that may see Assembly elections in February next year.

Sources said Rahul told the leaders, "You have to fight collectively, Punjab is an important state, and we stand a very good chance."

After the meeting, Bajwa told reporters that he has put forward his views which he thought were in the best interest of the party.

Maritime prowess key to economic, strategic influence: Modi

PM commissions three indigenous naval platforms

KOLKATA, PTI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said that a strong maritime capability is the deciding factor for a country's economic and strategic influence, and India understands this well and is preparing for it.

In his address after commissioning three indigenously built naval ships at the Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port here, Modi said India does not want to remain only a buyer country in the defence sector, and the nation's armed forces cannot become just a market for the world.

"The recognition of our capabilities lies in our self-reliance and not in becoming a market for the world," he said.

"No nation can become a big power without maritime prowess. Development, security and prosperity are tied to the seas. A country with maritime capabilities is strong and has more economic and strategic influence," Modi said.

He said India understands this reality well and is preparing itself for it. The PM commissioned the indigenously built stealth frigate Dunagiri, the survey vessel Sanshodhak and the anti-submarine warfare shallow water craft Agray.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the tri-commissioning ceremony of INS Dunagiri, INS Sanshodhak and INS Agray at Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port in Kolkata on Sunday. PTI

He said the frontline platforms represent key operational capabilities across maritime combat, hydrographic surveying and anti-submarine warfare.

Modi said India demonstrated its maritime capabilities a few years ago by commissioning aircraft carrier INS Vikrant. India's first indigenously built aircraft carrier INS Vikrant was commissioned in 2022.

He said India's journey from INS Vikrant to this date is not just about new warships but also about increasing self-reliance.

The PM said the commissioning of INS Agray, INS Dunagiri and INS Sansodhak is giving momentum to that journey. "These three ships were designed and built in India and represent the country's talent," he said.

Asserting that India is transforming itself fast from a buyer country to a builder country, he said, "We will be the decider the day we become a builder."

Stating that India was once among the world's largest defence importers, the PM said this dependence caused the country to face both strategic and security challenges.

Modi said that since 2014, his government has taken major policy-level reform initiatives to overcome these issues. "Primacy was given to self-reliance in the defence sector," the PM said, pointing out that as a result, new horizons have opened for design, manufacturing and export in this sector.

Prime minister said that over 40 warships and submarines have been commissioned in the last few years, and 45 large naval platforms are under construction.

Participants compete in the annual Bailgada Sharyat (bullock-cart race) at Pedgaon, in Satara district, Maharashtra, on Sunday. The event is a 400-year-old traditional bullock cart racing sport predominantly held in the state. PTI

2 dead, 5 critical in TN ammonia leak

E T B SIVAPRIYAN
CHENNAI, DHNS

At least two migrant women were killed, and about 60 others hospitalised on Sunday following a suspected ammonia leak at a private shrimp processing centre in Tiruvallur district. While several reports put the death toll at seven, Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay's official statement on the incident and top sources in the government told *DH* that the number of deaths stood at two, while five others are "critical."

The ammonia leak originated from the seafood processing unit of St Peter's Paul Seafoods Exports Private Limited near Periyapalayam on Sunday afternoon and spread across the premises, including the residential complex, where over 120 migrant workers from Assam, Jharkhand, and Odisha were staying.

As people complained of breathing difficulties, they were rushed to several private and government hospitals in Tiruvallur district, and Stanley Government Medical College Hospital, and Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital here.

NDRF personnel arrive at a seafood export unit following an ammonia gas leak, in Manjangaranai, Thiruvallur district, Tamil Nadu, on Sunday. PTI

"One person was declared dead on arrival at the hospital, and another died during treatment. Their bodies have been kept at the Tiruvallur Government Hospital for postmortem. Autopsy will begin once we get consent from their relatives," a top government source told *DH*.

The source clarified that while over 17 people have been shifted to Stanley and Rajiv Gandhi Hospital, all of them are under treatment, while a few are critical.

"Those admitted are sick and are on a ventilator. We are monitoring them as they may develop renal complications. They have been kept on a ventilator due to swelling in their throats. Once they get stable, they will be discharged," the source added.

Health Minister Dr K G Arunraj, who visited the hospitalised, told reporters that about 60 persons are being treated at various hospitals. "Every patient is being monitored by three people, including an anaesthesiologist. We have also sent our specialists to the Vels and Venkateswara Hospitals, where 46 people are receiving treatment," he said.

The intensity of the leak was so intense that the level of ammonia recorded immediately after the incident stood at 300 bpm. In the statement, the CM announced Rs 2 lakh as solatium for the deceased and said the state government will make arrangements to take the bodies of the victims to their native states. He also formed a three-member committee to look into the incident and submit an interim report in 24 hours and a final report in three days.

Kerala govt on backfoot over liquor tax exemption & rare-earth mining plans

ARJUN RAGHUNATH
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS

Trouble is brewing for the Congress-led UDF government in Kerala over the proposals in its maiden budget to slash taxes on liquor with lower alcohol content and tap the potential of the mineral-rich coastal areas of Kollam and Alappuzha.

Resentment against the proposals is coming from within the Congress. While Congress senior leader V M Sudheeran has reportedly sent a letter to Chief Minister V D Satheesan raising concerns over both proposals, Home Minister Ramesh Chennithala and Excise Minister M Liju expressed their displeasure over the decisions.

The previous CPM-led government decided to promote low-alcohol liquor and wine made from local fruits. The Opposition CPM is accusing the Congress of allowing tax reliefs.

Meanwhile, the Congress had opposed the CPM-led LDF government's decision and accused it of succumbing to the interests of liquor lobbies. The CPM is now levelling the same allegations against the Congress.

While the tax on liquor in the state is 251%, the budget proposed a sales tax rate of 120% for products having alcohol from 0.5% v/v up to 10% v/v, and 175% for products having alcohol strength from 10% v/v to 20% v/v.

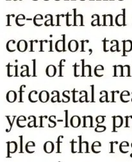
Chennithala and Liju said that a final decision on allowing low-alcohol products needed to be taken in the state's excise policy, and that it needs to be discussed in the Cabinet.

Opposition leader Pinarayi Vijayan said that reducing tax on liquor would lead to an increase in consumption. The move was aimed at helping liquor producers, he alleged.

The budget proposals to establish the Southern Kerala economic corridor and rare-earth and critical-minerals corridor, tapping the potential of the mineral-rich sand of coastal areas, go against the years-long protest by the people of the region against the massive sand-mining operations there. They raised concerns that it would affect the ecology of the region and also lead to massive coastal erosion.

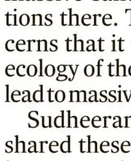
Sudheeran is said to have shared these concerns in the letter to Satheesan. His intervention assumes more significance as he played a key role in convincing the AICC leadership regarding the need to make Satheesan the CM, considering the popular support in Satheesan's favour.

V M SUDHEERAN
Congress leader



"The budget proposal is contrary to the UDF's election manifesto promise of implementing strong and effective policies to curb the spread of alcohol and narcotic substances in Kerala.

K M SHAJI
LSGD Minister



"We have a clear stand that liquor should not be consumed. The IUML is against alcohol. The Congress, the party of Mahatma Gandhi, is also against liquor. Both parties are opposed to alcohol.

Nihangs storm U'khand gurdwara, hold devotee hostage

RUDRAPRAYAG, PTI: A group of Nihangs, armed with spears and swords, stormed a gurdwara here and took a Sikh devotee hostage on the roof of the building to demand the release of four members of the sect who were arrested following a clash in Chamoli on June 16, police said on Sunday.

A heavy police force was deployed at the site following the standoff that began Saturday evening and is still on, even though the district administration on Sunday said the situation is fully under control and peaceful.

An officer said police are parleying with a Nihang member about ending the hostage situation.

"The police, district administration, and the Gurudwara management committee are in constant dialogue with the Nihang Sikhs, attempting to understand their concerns and find a solution," Rudraprayag superintendent of police said.

"The talks have yielded positive results; one of the Nihangs has come down from the roof to speak with the administration and police, and dialogue with the remaining individuals is ongoing," the officer said.

7 Naxals held in Jharkhand

KHUNTI (JHARKHAND), PTI: Seven Naxals were arrested in Jharkhand's Khunti district on Sunday, including PLFI area commander Shravan Das, who was injured in a gunfight with the police when he allegedly snatched a firearm and opened fire on the law enforcers in a forest.

CRUDE REALITY

India boosts Russian, UAE oil purchases in June

NEW DELHI, PTI

India's crude oil imports from Russia surged in June, while shipments from the United Arab Emirates were near-record levels as refiners sought to secure supplies ahead of the full restoration of flows from Gulf producers following the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, analysts said.

India imported an average of 2.66 million barrels per day of crude oil from Russia in June, through June 19, compared to 1.91 million bpd in May, data from maritime and commodity intelligence firm Kpler showed, cementing Moscow's position as India's largest oil supplier.

Imports from the UAE stood at 6,36,000 barrels per day (bpd) in June, through June 19, marginally below the record 6,44,000 bpd imported in May, while Venezuela emerged as India's fourth-largest crude supplier with shipments of 2,09,000 bpd, behind Saudi Arabia's 3,84,000 bpd.

Imports from the United States fell sharply to 91,000 bpd from 2,52,000 bpd in May, according to Kpler data.

The purchases underscore India's strategy of diversifying sourcing, with Russian barrels remaining attractive due to discounts and UAE supplies helping offset uncertainty surrounding shipments through the strategic waterway of the Strait of Hormuz.

A customer at a pump in New Delhi. The reopening of the Strait will come as a relief to the Indian crude market. REUTERS FILE

India, the world's third-largest energy importer, depends heavily on the Gulf region for crude oil, LNG and LPG. Supplies were disrupted after Iran closed the Strait of Hormuz, following US and Israeli attacks, choking a key energy artery that carries about 20% of global oil consumption and serves as the principal export route for Gulf producers, including Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, the UAE and Qatar.

Oil shipments through the Strait of Hormuz began recovering late last week after the US and Iran agreed to a ceasefire. However, the truce remains fragile, with Iranian authorities accusing Israel of violating the agreement, raising concerns over the durability of the reopening.

According to Sumit Ritolia, Senior Manager - Modelling at Kpler, post reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, crude oil and liquefied natural gas imports may see a more gradual normalisation.

Bengaluru Monday, June 22, 2026 Pages 18 Vol 79 No 172 ₹7

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DH

DECCAN HERALD

The Power of Good

Sooryavanshi puts Lanka A to the sword

Teen prodigy shines as India A emerge champs

Page 16

Business P.10

India, US to hold ministerial-level trade agreement talks this week

Nation P.12

No third-party claims on cover policies: Top court

State

Over 2.3k labourers rescued in four years **P.3**

World

'Did not seek Britain's help on India border dispute' **P.9**

LOOKING SOUTH — KANAKAPURA ROAD

Starting today, DH brings you a **five-part series** capturing **Kanakapura Road,** a major arterial road in **southern Bengaluru,** in all its vibrancy and frailty. In the first story, we track the real-estate sector along the corridor.

Real-estate buzz grows on Kanakapura Road, but big developers yet to place bets

PAGE 2

Key sticking points

1. Iran says no final deal possible without an end to Lebanon war
2. US-Iran MoU includes provision to end Israel-Hezbollah fight
3. Repeated clashes in Lebanon prompts Iran to say it will again shutter Hormuz, which was opened as part of deal
4. By Sunday evening, no reports of Israeli strikes or fights happening in Lebanon
5. Iran's support for regional armed groups may not be addressed in negotiations
6. Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian says Tehran won't relinquish its right to enrich uranium

US, Iran meet for talks amid threats by Trump

Iranian delegation leaves venue after US president's post

BURGENSTOCK (SWITZERLAND), AFP

US Vice President JD Vance speaks next to PMs of Pakistan and Qatar at Burgenstock, Switzerland, on Sunday. REUTERS

US Vice President JD Vance said on Sunday there was an opportunity to "turn over a new leaf" with Iran as the sides held talks aimed at building out the interim deal to end the war in Iran reached by the two sides last week.

Yet, as the meeting was happening, US President Donald Trump threatened in an online post to strike Iran if it did not "immediately stop their highly paid PROXIES in Lebanon from causing trouble".

The Iranian delegation left the venue of talks after Trump threatened to strike the Islamic republic.

"The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran, after meeting with the Qatari delegation as one of the mediating parties, left the building where the negotiations were being held," Iran's state news agency IRNA said.

"At the same time as the talks began in Switzerland, Donald Trump published a message on X in which he repeated his threats and remarks against Iran," it added.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (C) and Speaker Mohammed Ghalibaf (2nd R) arrive for talks. AFP

Iran's chief negotiator Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf warned the US against making threats at the Islamic republic, vowing that "our armed forces are ready to respond".

Vance, flanked by US negotiators Jared Kushner and Steve Witkoff, was at the luxury Burgenstock resort overlooking Lake Lucerne for talks with Tehran's negotiators on the preliminary US-Iran deal to halt the West Asia war.

"This is a historic meeting," Vance said in the negotiation room, set up with for the US team on one side and for the Iranians on the other.

But as Vance met with the Iranians, Trump said in a Truth Social post that Tehran had to rein in Hezbollah.

"If they don't, we'll hit Iran very hard again, just like we did last week, only harder!!!" Trump posted.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and chief negotiator Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf were leading the talks for Tehran.

The Iranian delegation did not address reporters in the room and at no point did Araghchi join Vance with the two mediating prime ministers to be photographed together.

The discussions are being mediated by Pakistan and Qatar. The negotiation table was set up in a U-shape, with Qatar and the US on one side, Pakistan and Iran on the other.

▸ Iran, Page 4

B'luru plagued by weak governance: KBG

Will fix things by getting basics right, says minister

DH SPECIAL

NAVEEN MENEZES
BENGALURU, DHNS

> Many of Bengaluru's current problems, be it traffic congestion, sewage issues, garbage or water shortages, are linked to illegal layouts. People build multi-storey buildings on small plots and narrow roads without parking or adequate sewage infrastructure. The city simply cannot support that density. Going forward, people will have to follow planning norms.
>
> **KRISHNA BYRE GOWDA**
> Greater Bengaluru Development Minister

Greater Bengaluru Development Minister Krishna Byre Gowda believes the city's problems stem not from a lack of money or ideas but from weak governance and poor enforcement of rules.

He argues that improving administrative systems, curbing illegal layouts and unauthorised constructions and getting the basics right are key to fixing Bengaluru.

In an interview with *DH*, he said his primary challenge is the weakening of governance and administrative systems.

"We talk about roads, traffic, garbage, flooding, environment and water, but all these are symptoms. The root cause is a weak administrative system. If we strengthen governance, many of these problems can be solved," he noted.

Gowda also believes that the recent splitting of Bengaluru into smaller corporations is the answer to fixing the city's problems. "There was no way a single commissioner could effectively administer an 800-sq km city with 1.5-crore people. Bengaluru has grown at a phenomenal pace over the last three decades and inherited problems such as traffic congestion, poor planning and inadequate infrastructure. Expecting one person to solve a cumulative problem created over 30 or 40 years is unrealistic," he stated.

The Byatarayanapura MLA has pledged to try to end unauthorised construction and creation of illegal layouts, recalling he stopped the registration of unauthorised layouts despite opposition from developers and some politicians, during his tenure as revenue minister.

On demolition of illegal structures, the 53-year-old minister stressed the need to prevent the continuation of same mistakes.

▸ KBG, Page 4

'Metro alone can't solve B'luru traffic', Page 3

Quickly

CJP founder Dipke targets PM Modi

The Cockroach Janta Party's protest at Jantar Mantar entered the second day on Sunday with its founder Abhijit Dipke targeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi over NEET and CBSE issues. Dipke said Modi would be considered the "most incompetent PM" if he does not sack Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. Dipke appealed to the farmers to support their agitation seeking Pradhan's resignation.

Details on Page 8

Drone drops, info gaps led to Pahalgam: NIA

Cross-border drones successfully dropped arms and ammunition as deep as Kashmir's Baramulla district without detection, according to a National Investigation Agency (NIA) chargesheet filed in last year's audacious Pahalgam terror attack case. The NIA probe has tracked the pre-attack movements of the terrorists who struck the popular Baisaran meadows in Pahalgam in April last year.

Details on Page 12

PM lays stress on maritime prowess

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said that a strong maritime capability is the deciding factor for a country's economic and strategic influence, and India understands this well and is preparing for it.
In his address after commissioning three indigenously built naval ships at the Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port here, Modi said India does not want to remain only a buyer country, and that the nation's armed forces cannot become just a market for the world.

Students miss NEET re-exam amid Cong event traffic snarls

BENGALURU, DHNS: Thousands of students appeared for the much-anticipated NEET re-exam on Sunday at centres across Bengaluru but some reportedly missed the exam due to traffic restrictions caused by a mega event organised by the Congress state leadership.

High drama unfolded outside the RC College of Commerce as a few aspirants were barred from appearing for the exam after arriving a few minutes late as the entry gates were closed at 1.30 pm.

One of them, travelling from Magadi, could not get a bus on time and reached the centre late.

In a desperate attempt to get in, three girl students tried to climb over the main gate but had to back out after finding the inner gate leading to the exam centre shut. They were later seen climbing out.

Though local police personnel deployed at the exam venue empathised with the students and permitted them through the outer gate, exam invigilators and security staff inside refused to let them enter the hall, citing rigid electronic protocols and face-recognition deadlines.

> The reporting deadline was 1.30 pm and the students came at 1.31 pm. The NEET re-exam was announced a month ago. Why did the Congress organise its rally on this very day? The rally triggered a three-hour traffic jam. How will students reach exam centres?"
>
> **A parent**

Furious parents staged a protest outside the gate. They alleged that a Congress event at Palace Grounds where B K Hariprasad took charge as state party chief had paralysed traffic across central Bengaluru.

▸ NEET, Page 4

Shinde gets upperhand as 2 MPs ditch Uddhav

MRITYUNJAY BOSE
MUMBAI, DHNS

Omprakash Raje Nimbalkar

The three-month-long Operation Tiger in Maharashtra, aimed at splitting the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT)'s parliamentary party, has nearly fructified as Osmanabad MP Omprakash alias Omraje Nimbalkar and Hingoli MP Nagesh Patil-Ashtikar on Sunday announced their decision to join the Eknath Shinde-led faction.

"The operation is successful...everything is intact," said Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

Fadnavis, who heads the BJP-led Maha Yuti dispensation, said, "Balasaheb's Shiv Sena is being run by Shinde Saheb. Uddhav Ji needs to introspect." "You will get breaking news soon...we don't leave operations incomplete, we complete what we take up," Shinde said.

Shinde, however, is yet to make a formal announcement, but indicated that the mission has been accomplished.

The Shiv Sena (UBT) had nine MPs, six of whom joined the Shinde group. The four other MPs who had earlier switched allegiance to Shinde are Sanjay Dina Patil, Sanjay Deshmukh, Sanjay Jadhav and Bhausaheb Wakchaure.

"I have decided to join the Shiv Sena under the leadership of Eknath Shinde Saheb," said Omraje. "I work 24x7, I want to see smiles on the faces of people," he said.

▸ Nimbalkar, Page 4

Transparency question looms over temple funds

HYDERABAD/CHENNAI/MUMBAI/THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS: Allegations of crores of rupees missing from the offerings made by devotees at the Ram Temple in Ayodhya have cast a shadow on how India's most popular temples manage the donations they receive.

A closer examination of the country's major shrines reveals a patchwork of time-tested systems combining surveillance technology, volunteer oversight and strict dress codes designed to ensure accountability.

Yet, as recent scandals at Sabarimala and Tirumala demonstrate, no system is entirely immune to abuse.

Facing Page

UNITED POSTURE

Participants perform yoga during a session attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the occasion of the International Day of Yoga, in Kolkata, on Sunday. PTI

2 dead in gas leak at shrimp processing unit

CHENNAI, DHNS: At least two migrant women were killed, and about 60 others hospitalised on Sunday following a suspected ammonia leak at a shrimp processing centre in Tamil Nadu's Tiruvallur district. While several reports put the death toll at seven, Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay's official statement on the incident and top sources in the government told DH that the number of deaths stood at two, while five others are "critical." The CM formed a three-member committee to look into the incident and submit an interim report in 24 hours and a final report in three days.

Facing Page

Cong banks on DK & BK for next polls

BENGALURU, DHNS: The ruling Congress on Sunday organised a massive show of strength in Bengaluru, making its first move towards retaining Karnataka in 2028 and winning the 2029 Lok Sabha polls.

"Both (D K Shivakumar, B K Hariprasad) are more or less of the same age. We have given (leadership) to them. Not just for the Assembly election; I am confident they will strengthen us in the Parliament poll also," AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge said.

Details on Page 4

Cross-voting: BYV bats for Dharmasthala test to find 'truth'

BENGALURU, DHNS

> Workers are upset with the behaviour of our MLAs. All 63 BJP MLAs are being suspected... I have decided today, I will speak to LoP R Ashoka too. Very soon, if possible, in the coming week only, we will call our LP meeting in Dharmasthala... However big we may be, all of us believe in God. The truth has to be decided in Dharmasthala.
>
> **B Y VIJAYENDRA,**
> BJP state president

The row in the BJP over some of its MLAs cross-voting for the Congress in the recent Legislative Council poll has a taken a fresh turn, with the saffron outfit's state president B Y Vijayendra on Sunday proposing a legislature party meeting in the temple town of Dharmasthala to "decide the truth".

He said he would discuss the matter with the Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly, R Ashoka.

"Workers are upset with the behaviour of our MLAs. All 63 BJP MLAs are being suspected... I have decided today, I will speak to LoP R Ashoka too. Very soon, if possible, in the coming week only, we will call our LP meeting in Dharmasthala... However big we may be, all of us believe in God. The truth has to be decided in Dharmasthala," Vijayendra told reporters.

Vijayendra also noted that he and Ashoka would go to Delhi to meet BJP national president Nitin Nabin and explain the political developments in the state.

However, Vijayendra's proposal for the LP meeting in Dharmasthala has not gone down well with a section in the party, with senior BJP leader S Suresh Kumar saying that the temple town shouldn't be dragged into the political row.

▸ Cross-voting, Page 4

SPIRITS UP

Excise revenue at new high despite lower sales

ASHWIN B M
BENGALURU, DHNS

Karnataka's excise revenue has crossed the Rs 40,000-crore mark for the first time, though liquor and beer sales saw a marginal decline, according to data from the Excise Department.

The state collected Rs 40,183.02 crore in excise revenue in 2025-26, up 12.3% from Rs 35,783.54 crore in 2024-25. This marks the highest annual collection in the last five years, driven largely by revised tax structures and tighter enforcement.

The data accessed by *DH* reveals a consistent year-over-year increase in total excise revenue since 2021-22.

People across the state bought 703.65 lakh carton boxes of Indian Made Liquor (IML) and 399.29 lakh carton boxes of beer last year. The current year is also off to a fast start, bringing in Rs 7,086.83 crore by the end of May. For 2026-27, the state has set an ambitious revenue target of Rs 45,000 crore.

KARNATAKA BOOZE MONEY

Year	IML sales*	Beer sales*	Excise revenue
2021-22	660.16	268.83	₹26,377.68 Cr
2022-23	698.46	390.66	₹29,920.37 Cr
2023-24	705.53	444.05	₹34,628.98 Cr
2024-25	708.85	450.36	₹35,783.54 Cr
2025-26	703.65	399.29	₹40,183.02 Cr
2026-27#	119.34	99.36	₹7,086.83 Cr

#End of May *Lakh cases/boxes

While excise revenue has surged to record levels, total sales of IML and beer have not followed an upward trajectory. The five-year data reveals that IML sales dipped from 708.85 lakh carton boxes in 2024-25 to 703.65 lakh carton boxes in 2025-26.

The reduction was even more visible in the beer category, where sales tumbled by over 11%, dropping from 450.36 lakh carton boxes down to 399.29 lakh carton boxes during the same period.

"Bengaluru Urban ranks first among all districts in liquor sales and consumption. Revenue collection, too, is the highest," a senior Excise Department official said.

He attributed the revenue surge to policy measures, including price revisions and improved compliance.

"The general upward revision of excise duties across several consumer slabs over the past two years has impacted sales across the state, particularly among the price-sensitive segments," the official said.

▸ Excise, Page 4

REALTY CHECK

Once known for plotted developments, Kanakapura Road is starting to attract high-rises even beyond NICE Road. With the proposed second airport and Kanakapura strongman as CM, some industry observers say real estate activity may gather pace while others express caution

Real-estate buzz grows on Kanakapura Road, but big developers yet to place bets

NAVEEN MENEZES
BENGALURU, DHNS

For years, Kanakapura Road in South Bengaluru was largely associated with plotted developments, while the city's real-estate momentum remained concentrated in the north and east. That perception is beginning to shift, driven largely by the proposed 7,500-acre Integrated Township in Bidadi.

Although major developers have not yet embarked on an aggressive land acquisition spree, market sentiment is turning increasingly positive. Speculation around a potential second airport in South Bengaluru has further added to the excitement.

Land prices have begun reflecting these expectations. In Chikkakuntanahalli and Kodiyala, sites that sold for around Rs 3,000 per sqft about 18 months ago climbed to Rs 4,000 earlier this year. Builders are now quoting upwards of Rs 5,500 per sqft, despite much of the surrounding land still being agricultural and located away from major highways.

Ramakanth S, a real-estate developer, said he had considered purchasing four acres in Harohalli. "Landowners were earlier quoting around Rs 70 lakh per acre. Prices have risen sharply since then, and I eventually dropped the plan," he said.

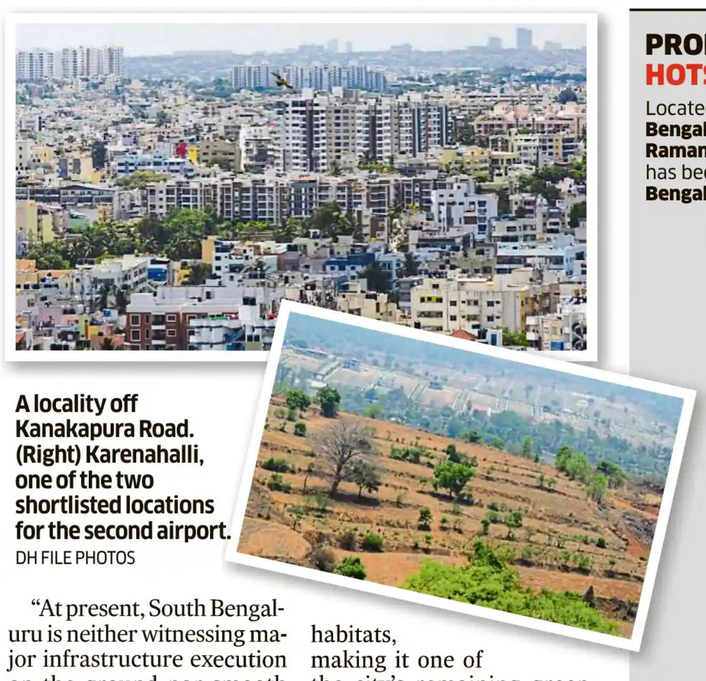
LOOKING SOUTH — KANAKAPURA ROAD

One of Kanakapura Road's strongest advantages remains its metro connectivity. It is also expected to benefit from major infrastructure projects, including the STRR, the proposed 10-lane PRR loop, and the revival of the Bengaluru-Bidadi link road planned by NICE Ltd. Development initiatives are also being explored by agencies such as the KIADB and KHB.

Mallanna Sasalu, CEO (South) at Puravankara Ltd, noted that established corridors such as Old Madras Road and Sarjapur Road have already witnessed extensive development. "Land availability is becoming increasingly scarce," he said, adding that the next wave of growth could emerge along Kanakapura Road and in North Bengaluru.

Despite the optimism, several developers remain cautious about South Bengaluru, particularly beyond NICE Road. One developer said the second airport remains speculative and should not be viewed as a certainty.

Another developer flagged regulatory challenges, noting that BDA and BMRDA have been slow in granting planning approvals because several large land parcels have already been notified for future projects. He added that the BDA is exploring new layouts along the proposed PRR Phase 2.



A locality off Kanakapura Road. (Right) Karenahalli, one of the two shortlisted locations for the second airport. DH FILE PHOTOS

"At present, South Bengaluru is neither witnessing major infrastructure execution on the ground nor smooth land conversion processes, both of which are essential for large-scale development," he said.

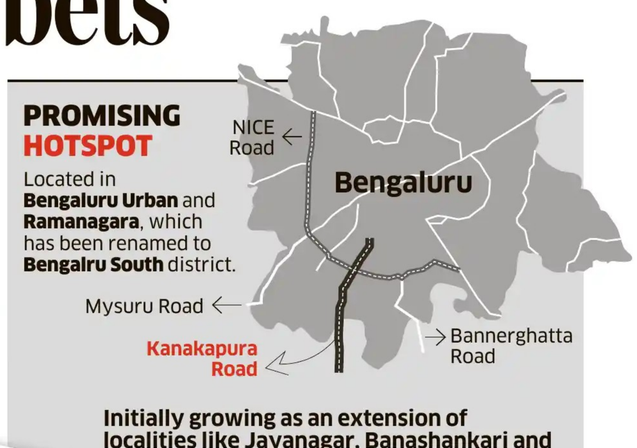
Not everyone is convinced that rapid urbanisation is desirable. Social activist Abhishek Gowda argued that the region's well-irrigated agricultural land should be preserved for environmental and water-security reasons.

"Bidadi already hosts industries such as Toyota and Bosch and has seen a certain degree of development. Much of the remaining land is fertile and irrigated. A large township would be better suited to dry land. South Bengaluru still retains groundwater reserves, tree cover and wildlife habitats, making it one of the city's remaining green belts," he said.

A BMRDA official contested the view that the region's agriculture is entirely sustainable. A significant portion of cultivation depends on polluted water sources, including Byramangala Lake, he said.

The official added that the township would incorporate substantial green spaces and that authorities are preparing a road network capable of supporting future growth.

"We may not be able to acquire every parcel of land, but the chief minister has directed us to prepare a master plan with wide roads and a structured road grid. That alone can become a catalyst for future development," he said.



Initially growing as an extension of localities like Jayanagar, Banashankari and JP Nagar, Kanakapura Road has emerged as a key driver of Bengaluru's growth across multiple sectors over the last two decades, reshaping the city's landscape in unimaginable ways.

- Land prices in villages along Kanakapura Road have nearly doubled in just 18 months.
- The renaming of Ramanagara district, of which Kanakapura is a part, to Bengaluru South, has driven up the prices. The buzz of the city's second airport has only added to it.

> I had considered purchasing four acres in Harohalli. Landowners were earlier quoting around Rs 70 lakh per acre. Prices have risen sharply since then, and I eventually dropped the plan.
> – **Ramakanth S,** Real-estate developer

NICE ROAD AND BEYOND

As per rough estimates, there are about **40,000 acres** of land beyond NICE Road in South Bengaluru. Close to **10,000 acres** are notified for various projects.

This includes **7,500 acres** for Bidadi Township, **1,200 acres** for Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board, and **500 acres** for Karnataka Housing Board.

If the second airport takes up about **5,000 acres**, another **15,000 acres** will still remain with the private sector for development.

Days after sewage plant accident, worker still missing

BENGALURU, DHNS

Rescue teams continued searching for a sanitation worker feared dead after he fell into a sewage treatment plant at a BWSSB facility in Varthur, officials said.

The missing worker was identified as 27-year-old Brijesh Kumar from Bihar.

Kumar and two coworkers fell into the wet well at the plant near Balagere Road between 5 pm and 6 pm on June 18.

While Kumar and supervising engineer Agilan Mohan were swept away by wastewater, the third worker, Karthik, managed to escape. Mohan's body was recovered in the early hours of June 20, while Kumar remains missing.

Kumar was standing on the small steps inside the well when he slipped. Mohan, who was supervising the work and holding on to Kumar's belt, also fell in. Teams from the National Disaster Response Force and Karnataka Fire and Emergency Services are continuing the search operation.

FIR against firm

Varthur police have registered a case against Vatech Wabag Ltd, a private company, for acts endangering life or personal safety following a complaint filed by Santosh Kumar, Assistant Executive Engineer, BWSSB.

The FIR stated that the Chennai-based company had a five-year contract to operate and maintain the plant.

Work was underway at the rear gate of the wet well's coarse screen when the incident occurred.

Police said the company allegedly ignored the BWSSB safety norms and safeguards while carrying out the work and should be booked for criminal negligence.

"We have issued a notice to the company. Rescue efforts will continue for now, and further course of investigation will take place as per the complaint," a police officer said.

The BWSSB had constituted a panel of three senior officials to conduct a comprehensive inquiry into the incident.

KSPCB notices to 6 apartments, academy near E-City

BENGALURU, DHNS: Rapid urbanisation of a village near Electronics City has overwhelmed local infrastructure and repeatedly hampered efforts to protect a lake, prompting the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) to issue notices to six apartment complexes and an educational institution for allegedly discharging untreated sewage into the environment.

Shikaripalya Lake. DH FILE

Until less than a decade ago, Shikaripalya was a quiet village. However, with Bengaluru's expansion pushing into the area, the village has undergone rapid urbanisation. The resulting surge in demand for water from high-rise apartments, along with increased sewage generation, has placed severe strain on the local drainage system.

In February, the KSPCB issued show-cause notices to the apartment associations of SV Sarovar Apartment, Happy Home 2, Sree Balaji Nest Apartment, Thirumala Residency, Happy Home Vivasvan, and Shree Nandana Elite Apartment. A similar notice was also served to Zia Academy Pvt Ltd.

"Establishing and operating apartments and discharging sewage into the environment without treatment and without consent of the Board amounts to a gross violation of Sections 25 and 26 of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act," the notices stated.

Shikaripalya village has around 4,000 families with a population of 21,321. In January 2024, the gram panchayat wrote to the taluk panchayat requesting assistance to set up a sewage treatment plant under government schemes to improve sanitation.

However, residents say delayed action has allowed polluted water to continue flowing into Shikaripalya Lake. The panchayat has been attempting to manage the situation by constructing diversion channels to redirect sewage and undertaking improvement works around the wetland.

Local resident Mani Rajan said lack of monitoring remains a concern, with contaminated sewage being dumped by tankers into feeder canals, leading to fish kills.

RISKY RIDE

A child is seen riding dangerously on the pillion seat of a two-wheeler, sitting facing backwards, on New BEL Road in front of Ramaiah College, raising serious safety concerns. Such risky riding practices put young lives in grave danger and must be strictly avoided. DH PHOTO/RANJU P

State on alert after deadly Shigella outbreak in Kerala

Strong surveillance as interstate travel raises risk of disease spread

AMULLYA SHIVASHANKAR
BENGALURU, DHNS

As Kerala grapples with an active Shigella outbreak that has infected more than 70 people and claimed six lives in the past week, doctors in Bengaluru say there is no immediate cause for alarm, but stress the need for stricter surveillance given the constant movement of people between the two neighbouring states.

Shigella is a highly contagious faecal oral disease that spreads through contaminated food, water and infected persons.

Dr Swati Rajagopal, Senior Consultant, Infectious Disease and Travel Medicine, said: "Shigella is considered highly contagious because only a very small number of bacteria are needed to cause infection. A person can become sick by touching contaminated objects, eating contaminated food or having close contact with an infected individual. The infection can spread quickly among family members and within communities if sanitation practices are not followed."

Explaining the severity of the disease, she said: "In severe cases, the bacteria can lead to bloodstream infections, seizures or damage to the intestines. Delayed treatment, lack of access to healthcare and poor nutritional status can further increase the risk of severe outcomes. The growing problem of antibiotic-resistant Shigella strains can also increase the chances of complications and death."

The frequent movement of people between Kerala and Karnataka has prompted doctors to call for stronger surveillance.

Dr Aishwarya R, Consultant, Infectious Diseases, said: "Considering how common travel and movement are between Kerala and Karnataka, the actual risk hinges on factors such as sanitation levels, safe food handling, early detection and prompt management of cases. So, public health surveillance, quick diagnosis and strong infection control measures are important for keeping transmission in check."

What is Shigella?

It is a highly contagious bacterial infection of the intestines that causes diarrhoea and spreads through contaminated food, water, and contact.

The basics

- Only a small dose of bacteria is enough to cause illness
- Food known to carry the bacteria are raw seafood, unwashed produce, unpasteurised milk
- Rising antibiotic resistance in some strains are a cause for concern
- Can cause dehydration, seizures, rare bloodstream infection

Exercise caution

Dr Sandeep S Reddy, Consultant, Infectious Diseases and Travel Medicine, said: "Caution should be exercised with foods known to carry the bacteria, such as raw oysters, tuna, seafood, unpasteurised milk, unwashed raw produce and prepared cold salads. An infected person continuously sheds the bacteria in their stool and remains highly contagious while experiencing active symptoms. Furthermore, they can continue spreading Shigella to others for two to four weeks after their diarrhoea comes under control."

North Division police crack down on 97 rowdy sheeters in major drive

BENGALURU, DHNS: Rowdy suppression squads from 13 police stations in the north division held late night operations on Saturday against 97 rowdy sheeters, police officials said.

The drive was carried out based on the directions of senior officers, days after Home Minister Priyank Kharge described the closure of 66 rowdy sheets as "nonsense" and called for a review of the decision by the Karnataka State Police Complaints Authority (KSPCA).

During the operation, police questioned the rowdy sheeters and gathered information about their current occupations and activities.

Police also verified whether they were regularly attending court hearings in pending cases and checked if any had been declared warrant absconders, proclaimed offenders or Long Pending Register (LPR) accused of failing to appear before courts.

"Rowdy sheeters were instructed to attend court proceedings without fail whenever required. They were also strictly warned not to engage in any unlawful activities or criminal offences," a police statement said.

Doctor booked for dumping biomedical waste into lake canal

BENGALURU, DHNS: A medical doctor has been accused of dumping biomedical waste into Yantaganahalli Lake in Nelamangala taluk of Bengaluru Rural district.

Dr Arun Girish Sagar, a private practitioner, allegedly threw used syringes, blood-stained cotton and bandages packed in cement bags into a canal that feeds the lake.

During a recent visit to the Yantaganahalli gram panchayat, Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister Eshwar Khandre was informed by residents that medical waste was being discarded into the waterbody, his office said in a statement on Sunday.

On his instructions, Panchayat Executive Officer Dr Bindu inspected the lake and submitted a report with photographic evidence. Officials later conducted a spot inspection.

Taluk Medical Officer Dr Padmini filed a complaint at the Nelamangala police station. The FIR stated that the doctor admitted the waste belonged to his hospital.

◆ IN THE CITY ◆

CULTURAL

Art Camp: 'Chitra Bharati'; SG Vasudev to attend; Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan; Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Srirampura; 11 am.

Exhibition: 'Broken Foot Journal and Other Stories'; Seagull Kolkata; Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath, Kumarakrupa Road; 11 am.

Play: 'Sharmishte' by Beluru Raghunandan; Hampa Nagarajaiah, P Chandrika, Dilawar Ramadurga, Banjagere Jayaprakas to attend; Organised by Ranga Chandira Trust; Nayana Auditorium, Ravindra Kalakshetra, JC Road; 4.30 pm.

Music Classes: Commencement of Carnatic classical music classes; BS Ananda to attend; Akhila Karnataka Brahmana Mahasabha; Gayatri Bhavan, 14th Cross, Banashankari 2nd Stage; 5.30 pm.

RELIGIOUS

Sermon: 'Bhagavatadalli Narayana Parva' by Pavamanachar Madanur; Organised by Ragigudda Sri Prasanna Anjaneyaswamy Bhaktha Mandali Trust; Samskruthika Mandira, Jayanagar 9th Block; 6.30 pm.

Invites to be published in this column should be sent to: **incitytoday@deccanherald.co.in.** Please note that hard copies will not be accepted

◆ CITY WEATHER ◆

FORECAST

Generally cloudy sky with light rain

TEMPERATURES

Maximum	30.0°C
Minimum	21.5°C
Rainfall (as of 8:30 am)	6 mm
Humidity (as of 5:30 pm)	65%
Sunset (Jun 22)	6:48 pm
Sunrise (Jun 23)	5:55 am
Moonrise	11:50 am
Moonset	--:--

(Relevant data recorded at 5.30 pm) Source: IMD

Minor fire at metro station

BENGALURU, DHNS: A minor fire broke out at the Nagasandra metro station on the Green Line on Sunday, but train services remained unaffected. The fire was detected in a signboard near the emergency exit around 1.30 pm.

Operations and fire response teams rushed to the site and extinguished the fire, bringing the situation under control. There was no disruption to metro services, Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) said.

Fire department personnel said a fire tender from the Peenya station was dispatched to the spot.

Need a hand? Write to us

Letters of grievances are pouring in and we are doing our best to accommodate as many as possible. Readers may write in to highlight civic problems affecting their locality and we will help address them in an interactive and effective manner.

Grievances and issues related to public utility agencies such as Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB), Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) and Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited (Bescom) would be highlighted in the weekly column.

The writeups, which could be accompanied by photographs highlighting the problems, will be published on Mondays. Mail your grievances to: peoplesproblems @ deccanherald.co.in

Deep craters on Chandapura-Anekal Road

The condition of Chandapura–Anekal Road, especially the stretch from the Suryanagar entrance to Marasur Gate, has become a nightmare for road users.

There are numerous deep craters — some as deep as one foot — along the entire stretch, making it extremely difficult and unsafe to navigate.

Several schools are located along this road, and many parents transport their children on two-wheelers. Their lives are at serious risk due to the extremely poor condition of the road.

This situation has persisted for the past 18 months without any improvement.

Deep craters make daily commute unsafe.

I request the government authorities concerned to take immediate action and ensure the safety of all commuters.
Sivaram G
Chandapura Anekal Road

How to decongest Seva Kshetra Jn

The recently opened flyover connecting HSR Layout and Ragigudda metro station is experiencing heavy congestion near Seva Kshetra Junction.

Traffic movement at the down ramp is getting choked, and it may be beneficial for the traffic police to introduce lane segregation using barricades or a physical divider. The left lane can be designated for vehicles heading towards Banashankari and JP Nagar 6th and 7th Phases, while the right lane can be reserved for traffic moving towards Jayanagar 4th Block, Gandhi Bazaar, Minerva Circle, Corporation Circle, City Market, Majestic and beyond.

Such clear demarcation of traffic flow is likely to streamline movement and significantly reduce congestion at the junction.
HV Sridhar
HSR Layout

INTERVIEW

'Metro alone can't solve Bengaluru traffic': KBG defends big road projects

Bengaluru needs more metro lines but the metro alone cannot solve the city's traffic woes, says Greater Bengaluru Development Minister Krishna Byre Gowda.

In this interview with Naveen Menezes of *DH*, Krishna Byre Gowda defended investments in road infrastructure, including controversial projects such as tunnel roads. He believes the city must expand both public transport and road networks to keep pace with rapid growth and rising vehicle ownership. Edited excerpts:

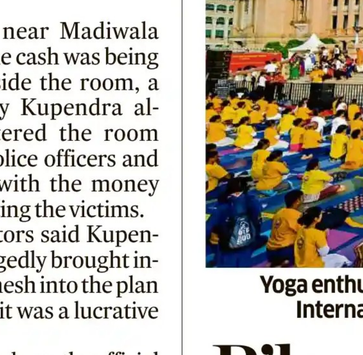
What is your stand on the tunnel road project?
Ten years ago, there was opposition to the proposed flyover from Chalukya Circle towards Hebbal. Today, we continue to see congestion at Ganganagar, Mehkri Circle, Windsor Manor Junction and elsewhere.

We need more public transport such as more metro and more buses. But we also need roads. These projects should not be viewed as alternatives to public transport. Simply opposing every infrastructure project for political reasons is not constructive.

Critics say projects such as tunnel roads are financially unviable and encourage more vehicles. Isn't this true?
You can pick and choose how you want to present your argument. If we do not invest in infrastructure, people say Bengaluru is losing companies because of poor infrastructure. If we choose to invest, they ask where the money is coming from. We are damned if we do and damned if we don't.

Bengaluru is India's growth engine. People are coming here, whether we like it or not. If we stop attracting talent and investment, the city will lose its dynamism. Urbanisation is a reality across the world. The challenge is managing it better.

You have announced ambitious deadlines for metro projects. Are they realistic?
The deadlines are undoubtedly challenging. Metro projects have historically missed timelines by large margins. I could have chosen not to announce dates and protected my own credibility. But if I don't set targets, there is no urgency. I have taken the more difficult path because I believe public interest is better served when there is a clear deadline to work.


Krishna Byre Gowda.

There is a plan to take the metro to peripheral areas such as Bidadi, Nelamangala etc, while many parts of Bengaluru are underserved. What is your view?
The upcoming metro lines will still serve many important intermediate areas. The Sarjapur-Hebbal corridor, for instance, cuts across the city through Koramangala and other dense neighbourhoods.

We will also be completing the outer loop by connecting JP Nagar, Magadi Road and Hebbal. Once these corridors are complete, we can look further outside but I am yet to study the proposals.

Your predecessor had described Bengaluru's garbage system as a "mafia". How difficult will it be to reform waste management?
There are definitely powerful interest groups behind many of Bengaluru's problems, including waste management. The moment you try to streamline systems, these groups will come after you. I expect that. But that doesn't mean I shouldn't try.

Once the new primary collection tenders are awarded, we want to put in place checks and balances, with incentives for good work and penalties for poor performance. That is how accountability can be brought into the system.

Will the responsibility of managing garbage be handed over to five corporations?
That discussion is still going on. We will debate it and examine what works best.

The priority right now is to ensure that the system becomes more efficient and accountable, whichever agency ultimately manages it.

Bulk waste generators have complained that waste processing charges are too high and have sought a reduction.
That subject is under discussion and we will examine it. But in a city with lakhs of establishments, only about 6,800 fall in this category. The debate should be kept in perspective.

DH
DECCAN HERALD

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We are a leading newspaper and magazine publishing group in Karnataka. We invite applications for the following position in our organisation.

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- Strong understanding of Karnataka and Bengaluru.
- Should be willing to work from office in Bengaluru.

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FIR against Facebook handles for remarks on CM

BENGALURU, DHNS: Bengaluru police have registered a case against admins of social media handles for sharing "false and derogatory" information against Chief Minister D K Shivakumar.

Sadashivanagar police registered the FIR on June 20 based on a complaint by Deepu C R, a law practitioner.

According to the FIR, the "derogatory" information was shared by 'Kumaraswamy for CM' and 'Janata Dal Secular' Facebook handles on June 17 under the header "Old habit begins again; an innate nature will not go away even if burnt."

The FIR was lodged under BNS Section 192 (wantonly giving provocation with intent to cause riot-if rioting is committed; if not committed). Police have launched a probe.

Sivakumar K B (left) takes charge as KSRTC managing director from Selvamani R. PHOTO/KSRTC.

Sivakumar takes charge as KSRTC MD

BENGALURU, DHNS: Sivakumar K B assumed charge as the managing director of the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) on Saturday.

A 2010-batch IAS officer, he previously worked as the managing director of the Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) for nearly a year.

Sivakumar took charge from Selvamani R, a 2013-batch IAS officer who serves as the Commissioner for Transport and Road Safety and was holding concurrent charge of the KSRTC MD.

Before Selvamani, Akram Pasha, a 2012-batch officer, helmed the KSRTC for a year and was transferred on June 10.

New minister

The reshuffling in the KSRTC and the BMTC came days after B S Suresha (Byrathi) took charge as the state's new transport minister, replacing Ramalinga Reddy.

CID inspector among three in custody for probe in dacoity case

BENGALURU, DHNS

A CID inspector and two real estate businessmen have been taken into three days police custody for further interrogation in connection with a dacoity case reported in Madiwala, after their arrest on Friday.

The accused, Mahesh Kanakagiri, inspector attached to CID-Homicide and Burglary Division, and two realtors Kupendra and Vasanth Kumar were part of a conspiracy that led to the dacoity of Rs 20 lakh from a group of Kerala-based businessmen who had come to Bengaluru believing they were participating in a bitcoin investment deal.

According to investigators, the complainant, Junish Babu from Malappuram in Kerala along with his friends Safeer and Aneesh were lured to Bengaluru by Naveen, who is believed to be based in Indonesia and Naveen allegedly introduced them to Shahin, who promised high returns through cryptocurrency trading.

During one of the meetings, Kerala men reportedly carried Rs 10 lakh.

Shahin allegedly told them that the proposed investment could go ahead only if they brought Rs 20 lakh. Later, Shahin asked them to come to a lodge near Madiwala and while the cash was being counted inside the room, a gang led by Kupendra allegedly entered the room posing as police officers and decamped with the money after assaulting the victims.

Investigators said Kupendra had allegedly brought inspector Mahesh into the plan by claiming it was a lucrative deal.

Kupendra drove the official CID jeep and used Mahesh's identity card to gain credibility. While Kupendra and others allegedly entered the lodge, Mahesh remained in the vehicle. All accused allegedly fled with the cash in the CID jeep after the dacoity.

Based on a tip-off, Madiwala police arrested Kupendra and Vasanth Kumar soon after FIR was registered while Mahesh was absconding till evening.

A special team tracked down Mahesh at his relative's house in the city and all accused were produced before the court on Saturday. The court granted the accused to police custody till June 22 for further interrogation.

The probe gained a crucial lead after complainant Junish Babu secretly recorded portions of the crime on his mobile phone. Investigators are relying on the footage as key evidence in the case.

Kunigal range forest officer electrocuted in Hassan

HASSAN, DHNS: Range Forest Officer (RFO) of Kunigal Range P Jagadish (46) was electrocuted while curing the walls of an under construction house at Sathyamangala layout in the city on Sunday.

Jagadish was getting a new house constructed at Sathyamangala layout.

On Sunday, he was watering the walls of the house for curing, when he got electrocuted. He was immediately shifted to a hospital, but doctors declared him dead upon arrival.

Jagadish served as the RFO in Hassan district from 2015 to 2020. Hassan town police visited the spot.

Yoga enthusiasts perform in front of the Vidhana Soudha on the occasion of 12th International Yoga Day, in Bengaluru on Sunday. DH PHOTO/KRISHNA KUMAR P S

B'luru turns out in thousands for International Yoga Day

BENGALURU, DHNS

Thousands of residents, from schoolchildren to senior citizens, rolled out their mats across the city on Sunday as Bengaluru observed the 12th International Day of Yoga under the theme 'Yoga for Healthy Ageing'.

A large-scale state-level session on the grand steps of Vidhana Soudha drew over 2,500 participants early in the morning, where Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot inaugurated the programme and led a portion of the common yoga protocol.

In his address, Gehlot emphasised the daily benefits of yoga and pranayama, saying the practice keeps him "energetic and healthy".

"Modern lifestyle has brought comfort, but it has also triggered severe physical and mental challenges. Yoga provides us with a healthy body, a calm mind, and a positive outlook," he said.

At Vidhana Soudha, organisers said the chosen theme "Yoga for Healthy Ageing" aimed to highlight longevity, mobility and improving quality of life as the city and nation grapple with rising lifestyle diseases and an ageing population. Participants of all ages, including children and senior citizens, performed asanas and breathing exercises under the guidance of certified instructors and local yoga institutions.

Health Minister U T Khader urged residents to view yoga as "a daily celebration rather than a one-day affair," and pointed to Karnataka's contribution to the discipline, citing the presence of S-VYASA, the world's first Yoga University, and the Mysuru tradition that traces its roots to the Wadiyar era.

Parallel events were held across the city, community groups, senior citizen forums and school contingents lined many neighbourhoods, while several NGOs and fitness centres offered free sessions and health checks after the practices. Prison authorities said inmates in some facilities were also given supervised yoga sessions as part of rehabilitation and wellness drives.

The Regional Office of the National Highways Authority of India Bengaluru, marked the day. Officers and staff members participated in the sessions, which highlighted the benefits of regular yoga practice for physical fitness, stress reduction, and mental well-being.

The Bengaluru Division of the South Western Railway commemorated the day with a mass demonstration session at the Railway Grounds in MG Colony. Led by Divisional Railway Manager Ashutosh Kumar Singh, the event drew enthusiastic participation from railway staff & their families. It was conducted by instructors from Art of Living and expert Rithik.

41-year-old man dies of swine flu

YELLAPUR (UTTARA KANNADA DISTRICT), DHNS: A 41-year-old man from rural Karwar died of swine flu at a private hospital in Mangaluru on Sunday. Meanwhile, in Karwar, members of his family are being treated on the suspicion that they too might have caught the infection.

The individual in question first complained of a fever on June 10, and went to a private clinic for a check-up. When he showed no signs of improvement, he was admitted to a private hospital in Sirsi taluk. While at the hospital, he started having trouble breathing, and was then transferred to a private hospital in Mangaluru.

"Tests conducted at the Mangaluru hospital confirmed that he had swine flu," said Yellapur Taluk Health Officer Dr Narendra Pawar.

'Over 2.3K child, adolescent labourers rescued in state in 4 years'

PAVAN KUMAR H
HUBBALLI, DHNS

At least 2,325 children and adolescents working in hazardous environments were rescued in Karnataka over the last four years.

Of the total rescued, 590 were children and 1,735 were adolescents. The Labour Department registered 1,572 cases of violations, of which 837 are under prosecution. However, only 89 cases resulted in convictions during this period. The department has imposed fines totalling Rs 41.57 lakh on violators.

Child rights activists, however, say the official figures provided by the Labour Department are only the tip of the iceberg, as a large number of cases go undetected. Most violations occur in rural and semi-urban areas, where mechanisms to prevent child labour remain weak.

The Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act prohibits children from working in hazardous environments. Although a 2016 amendment permits adolescents (aged 14 to 18) to work in non-hazardous occupations under certain conditions, experts say that violations remain widespread. In both urban and rural areas, teenagers are often forced into labour-intensive activities.

"The Act clearly states that adolescents can work only in non-hazardous environments and without affecting their education. However, school dropout boys and girls are often forced to undertake physically demanding work in the farms of 'relatives' (landlords)," said Vasudeva Sharma, Executive Director of Child Rights Trust.

He added that a majority of child and adolescent labourers rescued from major cities are migrants from northern and northeastern states.

Sharma blamed the lack of coordination among departments such as education, police, labour, health and others which are empowered to prevent child and adolescent labour, for the continued prevalence of the problem.

Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights member Thippeswamy K T said that unless grassroots-level officials and personnel from the Women and Child Development Department, who serve as the eyes and ears of the system, are strengthened, it will be difficult to prevent the exploitation of children and adolescents at workplaces.

Sources in the Labour Department told *DH* that a shortage of workforce and the lack of vehicles for labour inspectors at the district level were hindering action against violators.

Experts also pointed to the poor conviction rate as a reason for the continued prevalence of child and adolescent labour.

"According to my experience, only those who cannot afford a lawyer get convicted for child labour violations. Lack of evidence, poor documentation of case histories and other procedural lapses often result in cases being dismissed by courts," Sharma said.

A senior official at Labour Department informed *DH* the department has been coordinating with various agencies to prevent children and adolescents from working in hazardous environments.

The source attributed the low conviction rate to lengthy court proceedings.

VASUDEVA SHARMA
Executive Director,
Child Rights Trust

"The Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act clearly states that adolescents can work only in non-hazardous environments and without affecting their education. However, school dropout boys and girls are often forced to undertake physically demanding work in the farms of 'relatives' (landlords).

DKS is no Chanakya: Ashoka

BELAGAVI, DHNS: "Chief Minister D K Shivakumar is no Chanakya. Chanakya would never resort to horse trading. The Congress party, which has resorted to horse trading, will be taught a fitting lesson," Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Assembly R Ashoka told reporters in Belagavi.

Ashoka's remarks come on the back of the crossvoting controversy in the Council elections, wherein a number of JD(S) and BJP MLAs voted in favour of the ruling party. Accusing the Congress of enticing those MLAs facing legal action, Ashoka said, "They were tempted into voting for the Congress. This is not a healthy sign. The Congress, which reproached the BJP for carrying out Operation Kamala in 2019, has shamelessly carried out what can be called Operation Hasta."

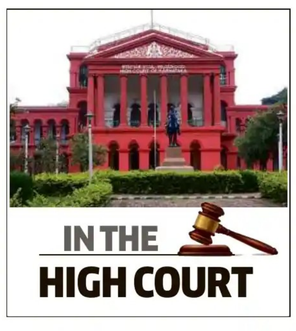
Admitting that BJP MLAs had crossvoted in the Council elections, Ashoka said that the party would soon identify the errant legislators. "We will ensure that such MLAs do not contest elections," said the LoP.

Leaders in the Karnataka BJP will brief the party's central leadership about the crossvoting controversy, said Ashoka. "We have sought time with the party top brass to discuss this issue. Once the party's central leadership agrees to hear us, we will go to New Delhi, along with state BJP president B Y Vijayendra, and apprise them of the situation," he added.

Queried about Vijayendra's plan to get all MLAs to swear before the Dharmasthala deity, Ashoka said, "We will discuss it with the party leadership, and take a suitable decision."

MV Act: 'Claimant needn't prove employment beyond a doubt'

BENGALURU, DHNS



The high court has held that in cases under the Motor Vehicles (MV) Act, the claimant is not required to prove beyond reasonable doubt as to the employment.

A division bench comprising Justices Jayant Banerji and Tara Vitasta Ganju observed this in an accident case involving a KSRTC bus.

The accident occurred in 2016 at Jakribettu near Bantwal Kasba village in Dakshina Kannada district.

The KSRTC bus, heading to B C Road from Belthangady side, swerved to the wrong side of the road while trying to overtake a vehicle and knocked down K J Sushanth Rai, 31, who was riding towards Belthangady. Sushanth succumbed to his injuries on the way to hospital.

On March 3, 2020, accident tribunal in Mangaluru awarded Rs 22.4 lakh compensation along with 6% interest.

Challenging this, KSRTC contended that although a salary certificate with Rs 11,000 monthly salary along with incentive (Rs 4,000) and a daily allowance of Rs 100 was produced, the employer Rajatha Distributors did not prove that they were in business.

On the other hand, the court was informed that Gangadhara Shetty, partner of Rajatha Distributors, was produced as a witness, to certify employment and salary of Sushanth.

It was submitted that additional amounts ought to be awarded as one of the claimants lost her husband three days before the delivery of their child.

The bench said the salary certificate is on the letterhead of Rajatha Distributors and bears signature of its partner Gangadhara Shetty.

The bench noted both the testimony of the employer as well as salary certificate evidence that the deceased was employed for five years and was earning Rs 11,000 per month. In addition, nothing was elucidated from the cross-examination to show otherwise, the bench said.

The bench cited the Rajwati case wherein the Apex Court held that even if a salary certificate or salary slip is not proved in evidence, the court is not justified in not awarding compensation on that basis.

"In present case, the claimants produced a salary certificate of the deceased in support of proof of earning. The certificate is on letterhead and is duly signed by one Gangadhara Shetty – partner of Rajatha Distributors. The said Gangadhara Shetty has also been produced as witness and has deposed in relation to salary being earned by the deceased. In these circumstances, this court finds no reason to interdict findings of the tribunal," the bench said.

Cong banks on DK-BK combine to keep it battle-ready for polls

Hariprasad takes over as KPCC prez at party convention

BENGALURU, DHNS

The ruling Congress on Sunday organised a massive show of strength in Bengaluru to mark its organisational changes, making its first move towards retaining Karnataka in 2028 and winning the 2029 Lok Sabha polls.

"Both (D K Shivakumar, B K Hariprasad) are more or less of the same age. Our senior leaders here on the stage will guide them. I am also confident that they will strengthen us in the upcoming parliamentary polls," AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge said.

He was speaking during the occasion of senior Congressman and MLC B K Hariprasad taking over as the KPCC president from D K Shivakumar, who recently became the chief minister.

Slamming the BJP and the RSS-led Sangh Parivar, Kharge said: "If we don't come to Delhi, RSS, BJP and Modi, who are trying to spoil the nation, won't go. You must make up your mind to send them home. This is impacting women, youths... They have been ruling for thousands of years, where power was in the hands of the few. Modi is trying to retain that hierarchy. That's why RSS, ABVP support them."

Contrasting independent India's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru's contributions to the country, specifically the public sector, Kharge wondered if Modi had any contribution like Nehru's towards public sector undertakings (PSUs) that generated lakhs of jobs.

"The Modi government must fall. You wait and watch. Modi is facing serious challenges since he hasn't done any work properly. He has not helped workers. Today, there have been lacunae in education, and children are being misled through syllabus. Vice-chancellors and teachers are having RSS background. This is to ensure political control remains with them," he said.

Taking exceptions to sloganeering in favour of particular leaders, the AICC president warned Congress cadres against hero worship.

'RSS, BJP cowards'

New KPCC president B K Hariprasad in his speech slammed the RSS and BJP as "cowards," accusing the BJP of creating instability through religion-based politics.

"We shouldn't allow Congress ideology to get weakened. RSS and BJP are cowards. Throughout their lifetime they keep maligning Nehru but cannot come near him too. Nehru had a nation-building vision, and nurtured several institutions. However, Modi is surrendering before Trump."

All India Congress Committee president Mallikarjun Kharge spins a charkha to inaugurate the convention where B K Hariprasad took over as state Congress president in Bengaluru on Sunday. Minister K H Muniyappa, former chief minister Siddaramaiah, Chief Minister D K Shivakumar and Congress general secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala are seen. DH PHOTO/PRASHANTH H G

'Cabinet to decide on restoring student polls'

Chief Minister D K Shivakumar said that the Cabinet will decide on restoring student union elections in the state. He said that student elections will be conducted in the state from this year only. "Through such elections, we will prepare leaders from the panchayat till Parliament," he said.

"Myself and Hariprasad grew as student leaders in the same college. He contested elections 2-3 years before me. While he contested in 1983, I did so in 1985. I am extremely satisfied to be handing over the president's position to a loyal worker of the Congress who has organised the party across the country," Shivakumar said.

He announced that five-member guarantee committees will be formed at all panchayat and wards to reexamine the documents of guarantee beneficiaries.

"In every panchayat and ward we will constitute five-member committees. That way, there will be committees in (each of) 7,000 panchayats and 4,000 wards. That way, think how many leaders we will create. The Congress is committed to the idea that a leader must develop leaders, not followers."

Ride gets bumpier for RTCs as W Asia crisis drives up prices

Bills balloon due to costlier fuel, raw materials, spare parts

ARUNKUMAR HURALIMATH
HUBBALLI, DHNS

The monthly expenditure has risen to around Rs 225 crore from Rs 205 crore earlier, in just 3 months, for KSRTC. Prices of required items have risen due to supply chain disruption and shortage.

The 3 state-run road transport corporations (RTCs) in Karnataka are under immense financial pressure due to the rise by an average of 20% in prices of materials required for bus operations as a result of the US-Iran conflict. Add to this, the rise in diesel rates by Rs 8 per litre.

The corporations require spare parts, petrochemical products, liquid urea, aluminium sheets, lubricants and rubber for tyre retreading.

Following the conflict, supply of these materials has been disrupted, leading to a sharp increase in prices.

According to Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) sources, the prices of several raw materials increased by 10% to 30%.

Earlier, the corporation spent around Rs 45 crore per month on the materials. Now, it incurs an additional expenditure of Rs 9 crore. Sources said the corporation spent an extra Rs 50 lakh on fuel a month.

Overall, monthly expenditure has risen to around Rs 225 crore from Rs 205 crore earlier, in just 3 months.

Officials of Kalyana Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (KKRTC) said buses of the corporation consume about 3.24 lakh litres of diesel a day.

Its monthly fuel expenditure has increased from Rs 85.53 crore to Rs 93.31 crore, resulting in an additional burden of nearly Rs 8 crore.

According to North West Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (NWKRTC) officials, the corporation is spending an additional Rs 9 crore on fuel every month, taking its fuel bill to Rs 88 crore.

Earlier, it spent around Rs 8 crore per month on spare parts and other materials. Now, it has to spend an additional Rs 2 crore to Rs 3 crore on these items.

The three corporations together require around 8,000 types of materials and spare parts, procured through a tender process.

Suppliers source these materials both domestically and through imports. Of these, 550 to 600 items are required regularly. However, the conflict has disrupted supply chains, leading to shortages and price escalation.

The corporations generally procure materials well in advance, with contracts often covering requirements for up to a year. Tenders are floated and suppliers quote their rates. However, officials said supply has been affected for the past four months due to the conflict.

NWKRTC managing director Priyanga M said several suppliers have been unable to supply materials at rates quoted earlier because of the steep rise in prices. As a result, some suppliers have stopped deliveries. The corporation has floated fresh tenders with revised rates.

She said the corporation was procuring spare parts from various sources, including government agencies and private suppliers, to ensure uninterrupted fleet operations. The prices of computers have also increased, she said.

Former Tripura CM marries Kannada actress

AGARTALA, DHNS: Former Tripura chief minister Biplab Deb last week married Kannada film actress Triveni Rao at a private ceremony in Delhi.

Deb is currently Lok Sabha MP from Tripura West. Triveni came to limelight in 2018 for her role of 'Constable Saroja' in Shivaraj Kumar-starrer "Tagaru."

Deb was the first BJP chief minister of Tripura when the party won the elections in 2018. He resigned from the post in 2022.

This is Biplab Deb's second marriage. He divorced his first wife Niti Deb in September 2025.

Heavy showers pound Bhadravathi; light rains in coast

BENGALURU, DHNS

Motorcyclists navigate flooded outer ring road following rains in Mysuru on Sunday. DH PHOTO/ANUP RAGHT

While most parts of the state are experiencing a prolonged dry spell, Bhadravathi town in Shivamogga witnessed heavy rains, accompanied by thunder and lightning, after a week-long lull, on Sunday.

The sky remained overcast till afternoon. It started raining, coupled with thunder activity, at 2 pm and continued to pour for the next two hours.

The showers left main roads in the Paper Town, including BH Road and CN Road, waterlogged causing grave hardships to the motorists. The Sunday showers disrupted the shand (santhe) as the vendors struggled to save vegetables, clothing and other items in the rain.

Several parts of the taluk, including Koodligere, Hiriyuru and Baranduru, also received heavy rains.

NR Pura town in Chikkamagaluru district also received thundershowers on Sunday afternoon.

Rain forecast

Several pockets of south interior Karnataka and coastal districts received light showers.

Parts of Mysuru city and the surrounding areas received good rainfall on Sunday. The India Meteorological Department has predicted rainfall in the Mysuru region for the next few days.

On Monday and Tuesday, heavy rainfall is likely to occur at one or two places over Hassan and Kodagu districts, and light to moderate rainfall at many places over Mysuru, Chamarajanagar and Mandya districts, according to the weather department.

Shinde gets upperhand as two MPs ditch Uddhav

Nimbalkar, from Page 1

However, Omraje made it clear that he does not face any issues with ED, CBI and IT and has made a conscious decision to take up the cause of common people.

Omraje thanked the Thackeray family for their love. "Whether it is Balasaheb, Uddhav Ji or Aaditya...they have always showered love," he said.

Referring to the verdict involving the murder of his father and Congress leader Pavanraje Nimbalkar in 2006, he said that the Special CBI Court acquitting all the accused is a shock to his family.

Patil-Ashtikar said, "First of all, let me make it clear that I am not upset with anyone. Secondly, Uddhav Ji gave me a lot of love. Sanjay Raut and others have the right to say what they want; they are our elders," he said in what was an attack on Thackeray aide and the Rajya Sabha member."

Thackeray apologises

Addressing a meeting in Mumbai, Thackeray apologised to the people. "I want to apologise to the people that we have sent such people," he said at a public meeting in Mumbai, owning up to the responsibility. However, he assured that the party will make a strong comeback.

'Getting basics right key to fixing B'luru'

KBG, From Page 1

"My job is not to create controversy or sensationalise issues. If we want solutions, everyone including the government and citizens has to play by the rules," he said.

Acknowledging that Bengaluru's roads remain a major concern, Gowda believes roads are bad because they are being made badly, not because there is insufficient money. "Road construction is not rocket science. Everyone has to take responsibility whether it is contractors, engineers, officials and politicians, including me.

"If we continue to spend money without improving quality, nothing will change. The roads we build won't last even two years. For a certain period, the quality of roads in my constituency was not good as I was preoccupied with my ministerial responsibilities. Now, I am trying to tighten it. Once the bad culture sets in, it is monumentally challenging to change that."

With less than two years left for him to be at the helm, Gowda conceded that "I am not here to reimagine the city overnight," but getting the basics right.

"I do not believe in radical change and mega solutions. If systems function the way they are supposed to, if roads are built properly, if laws are enforced, if citizens cooperate and if administration works efficiently, many of Bengaluru's problems can be solved," he said.

Stating that "without people's cooperation, nothing will work", the minister said: "Some decisions may be difficult, but if they are in the larger public interest, we must be willing to accept them."

Students miss NEET re-exam amid Congress event traffic snarls

NEET, From Page 1

One parent fumed: "The reporting deadline was 1.30 pm and the students came at 1.31 pm. The NEET re-exam was announced a month ago. Why did the Congress organise its rally on this very day? The rally triggered a three-hour traffic jam. How will students reach exam centres?"

The parents alleged that not enough traffic police were deployed to clear the congestion because most were posted near Palace Grounds for the political event.

Student wait outside a centre for NEET re-examination in Bengaluru on Sunday. DH PHOTO/PUSHKAR V

Home Minister Priyank Kharge acknowledged that three students had missed the exam at RC College.

A viral post on X claimed that several NEET aspirants nearly missed the exam at MES PU College, Malleswaram, due to traffic congestion. The students, who had travelled from a neighbouring district, got caught in a severe traffic jam near RT Nagar Road and Palace Grounds.

The home minister said the traffic police had issued public notifications and traffic advisories well in advance.

Students who took the exam said it was "quite moderate".

Biker charred to death after collision with RTC bus

MUDHOL (BAGALKOT DISTRICT), DHNS: In a horrific accident, a young bike rider was burnt alive after a head-on collision with a RTC bus sparked a massive fire on Soregaon-Mugalkhod route in the taluk on Sunday.

Naveen Gorkah

The impact of the crash was such that the bike caught fire, killing Naveen Gorkah (22), a resident of Mudhol town, instantly.

The accident occurred when Naveen was riding to Mudhol. He rammed his bike into the Badami-Ichalkaranji route bus head-on. Due to the impact, fuel started leaking from the bike, igniting the fire instantly.

The Mudhol police have registered a case.

Cross-voting: BYV proposes LP meet in Dh'sthala to find truth'

Cross-voting, from Page 1

"Truly, our party president's announcement has confused me. This doesn't feel right, somehow... Dharmasthala has its own sanctity. Let us not drag Dharmasthala into the low-level cross-voting in politics," Suresh Kumar said in a post on social media.

Stating that some people had obtained "sadistic pleasure" by maligning Dharmasthala, Kumar said: "If heroes who cross-voted take an oath before the Dharmasthala deity Manjunatha and display their moral bankruptcy, the maligning will only increase. Such an act, which seeks to malign the greatness of Manjunatha, shall not be taken up."

While the ruling Congress was widely expected to win five out of the seven MLC seats that went to polls, the sheer scale of the cross-voting (11 votes from the BJP and the JD(S) together, and one invalid vote from the BJP) has rattled the NDA.

Currently, a three-member fact-finding committee comprising MLC CT Ravi, BJP state vice-president N Mahesh and Hubli-Dharwad Central MLA Mahesh Tenginkai is probing the "truth" about the cross-voting.

◆ WEATHER ◆

Overview: Rainfall occurred at one or two places over the State..
Forecast June 22: Partly cloudy sky becoming generally cloudy sky towards evening/night. Light to moderate rain/ thundershower likely at one or two places.

INTERIOR NORTH

Stations	Max	Min	Rain
Belagavi	33.8	21.6	0.0
Bidar	38.0	22.5	8.2
Vijayapura	35.0	22.5	0.0
Dharwad	32.8	21.0	0.0
Haveri	31.2	22.6	0.0
Kalaburagi	39.6	26.5	0.0
Raichur	37.4	26.4	0.0
COASTAL			
Honnavar	33.0	24.5	0.0
Karwar	32.4	26.2	2.0
Shirali	NA	NA	NA
Mangaluru	31.4	24.8	0.1

INTERIOR SOUTH

Stations	Max	Min	Rain
Agumbe	28.5	22.1	0.0
Bengaluru	29.2	21.5	5.8
Ballari	NA	NA	NA
Chamarajanagar	--	--	--
Chikkamagaluru	--	--	--
Chitradurga	31.1	22.1	0.0
Davangere	32.5	20.8	0.0
Hassan	--	--	--
Mysuru	31.4	20.6	0.0
Madikeri	--	--	--
Kolar	31.0	21.6	0.0
OTHER STATIONS			
New Delhi	37.0	27.0	NIL
Kolkata	32.0	27.0	NIL
Mumbai	32.0	26.0	NA
Chennai	33.0	27.0	NA
Pune	32.0	24.0	NA
Hyderabad	34.0	24.0	NA
Th'puram	28.0	26.0	NIL

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A beautiful life, a loving heart and a soul that will always remain in our memories.
Love, H.A. Hareesha (Husband) & Pramodini (Daughter)

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SAD DEMISE

We regret to inform the sad demise of our beloved mother..
Smt. Nalini Ramachandra Chetty
D.O.B: 29-05-1942 D.O.D: 21-06-2026
Forever in our hearts Family Members and Friends

US, Iran meet for talks amid threats by Trump

Iran, from Page 1

Pakistan and Qatar each also had one sat in the middle, at the head of the table.

What Trump "has asked us to do is turn over new leaf to transform our relationship with the people of Iran", said Vance.

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was flanked in the Swiss talks by Qatar's Prime Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani as mediators made opening remarks.

Iranian state TV reported on Sunday that the Islamic republic's nuclear programme had not been discussed.

"No negotiations on Iran's nuclear programme took place during the 80-minute first round," the state broadcaster said, adding the focus was on implementation of the MoU between Tehran and Washington, and the situation in Lebanon.

Shri D K Shivakumar
Hon'ble Chief Minister

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA

Dr. G. Parameshwara
Hon'ble
Deputy Chief Minister

Shri Krishna Byre Gowda
Hon'ble Bengaluru
Development Minister

Plant a sapling

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Bengaluru Urban Ecological Restoration Mission 2026-2030

Certificate
OF PARTICIPATION
This is to certify that
Has participated in the largest tree planting drive under Bengaluru Urban Ecological Restoration Mission 2026-2030, as part of a world record attempt held on 27th June 2026 in Bengaluru
Shri D K Shivakumar
Hon'ble Chief Minister
Government of Karnataka
Shri Krishna Byre Gowda
Hon'ble Bengaluru
Development Minister
Shri N.A. Haris
Chairman
Bangalore Development Authority

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- Recognition as a Contributor to Bengaluru's Green Future
- Participating in a Historic Record Breaking Movement

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

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for outstanding contributors

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Native plant saplings

50,000
Citizens & Volunteers

Plant for Bengaluru. Be Remembered Forever

Saturday, 27 June 2026 | 7:00 AM – 7:00 PM

Planting Locations Across Bengaluru

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Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Layout – Bengaluru West
Banashankari 6th Stage Layout – Bengaluru South | **Lake Buffer Zones**
Nala Buffer Zones | **Parks and Ecological Zones** Across Bengaluru

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5 City Corporations of Greater Bengaluru Authority | Labour Department
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Department of Higher Education | Civil Societies

BDA Chairman **Shri N.A. Haris** planting a sapling as part of the **Bengaluru Urban Ecological Restoration Mission 2026–2030**

DECCAN HERALD
ESTABLISHED 1948

Walking as dignity, not a daily struggle

The Supreme Court ruling that the freedom to walk on demarcated, safe, and well-maintained footpaths is a fundamental right expands citizens' rights and changes the idea of roads and mobility in urban and rural communities. The scope of Article 21, which guarantees the right to life, has been steadily expanded by the court over the years, and now it has made walking, the "simplest of the simple human activity, inextricably connected to life," a part of dignified life. The apex court has also held that the right to move freely, a fundamental right, will be meaningful only if the right to walk safely is ensured. A bench of Justice P S Narasimha and Justice Atul S Chandurkar also ruled that the violation of the right to walk on demarcated footpaths entitles the citizens to invoke constitutional and legal remedies for restitution and compensation.

The court has directed the government to enact a law affirming citizens' right to safe roads and recognising the duty of municipal authorities and local bodies to build and maintain necessary pedestrian infrastructure. The ruling came in a case related to the death of a schoolboy who was walking on the road and was knocked down by a water tanker. It has long been observed that cities are designed for the elite and the well-to-do who have vehicles and other facilities. The judgment underlines the idea of an inclusive city that serves everyone, including the pedestrian, the physically disadvantaged, the weak, the elderly, and the children. Walking is elemental to human nature, and the court has even invoked the cultural and social value of the activity, which is central to individual and collective life. It has also observed that the "Motor Vehicles Act has been an impediment and, in many ways, undermined the precious rights of walkers".

The Supreme Court ruling has the potential to change the idea of roads and mobility in our urban and rural spaces

The ruling imposes on governments and civic administrations the duty to provide safe, walkable roads and sidewalks to all citizens. No town or city in India has safe pavements. They are all broken, encroached, and poorly maintained, or even used as parking spaces and dumping grounds for construction materials and urban waste. They are also venues of commercial activities undertaken by street-food vendors, vegetable sellers, and others. The court has called for a new urban culture and planning to clean up pavements and make the roads safe. Will administrations have the will, capability, and resources to enforce the judgment? There may even be conflicts between the right to life and the right to livelihood, and between various pressures and interests. Courts, including the Karnataka High Court, have in the past issued similar rulings that were not implemented.

Cough syrup curbs an incomplete prescription

The government order requiring that cough syrups be sold only on a doctor's prescription is a welcome intervention to address the threat of poisoning from contaminated syrup-based medicines. Cough syrups have been removed from Schedule K, which earlier allowed them to be sold even in general stores in villages, and over-the-counter sales from pharmacies have been prohibited. They can only be sold from licensed pharmacies on a valid medical prescription. Cough syrups have caused deaths and sickness, especially among children, as they were readily available as popular medication. Many deaths have been reported from within India and from other countries where the syrups were exported. Last October, 22 children died after consuming cough syrups in Chhindwara, Madhya Pradesh. There were many other cases of deaths from different states. Cough syrups exported from India were linked to the deaths of dozens of children in Gambia, Uzbekistan, and Cameroon. The World Health Organization (WHO) has issued an alert about Indian cough syrups.

Many people consume cough syrups without understanding the risks. Making a doctor's prescription mandatory might help to curb sales, but such rules are commonly flouted. The order does not address the real problem at the manufacturing stage, where the syrups are contaminated with dangerous chemicals. There are no effective safety regulations and guidelines, and an efficient system for monitoring and supervision of processes. The statutory mechanism for quality control and inspections does not work for various reasons, including lack of necessary infrastructure, facilities and manpower, loopholes in the legal framework, delays in the working of the system, and corruption and malpractices. Cases are forgotten soon, and erring units come back into business. Penalties and other punitive actions are often reversed on various grounds. Even after incidents of contamination become public, cough syrups made by the same company continue to be available in the market.

The real problem at the manufacturing stage is yet to be addressed

The solution to the problem must begin at the source, not at the point of sale. There are over 2,000 cough syrup manufacturers in India, including major pharmaceutical units and small and third-party units. It must be ensured that they follow the right processes, backed by a rigorous regime of testing, monitoring, and quality assurance. Rules demand that the raw materials and every batch of the product should be tested for their quality, but that is not done. The responsibility for the implementation of the rules and regulations rests with the state agencies and regulatory bodies in the sector. There is no effective co-ordination between central and state agencies in the field. Unless these weaknesses are addressed, a restriction at sales points will not achieve the intended results.

THE MISSING PIECE

Reframing the AI jobs debate

Talk is all about job loss these days, but both doomsayers and optimists are asking the wrong question

MADAN PADAKI

The most consequential economic debate of our time is playing out between San Francisco and Davos, and it is being conducted as if districts like Vijayapura do not exist.

In May 2025, Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei told Axios that AI could eliminate half of all entry-level white-collar jobs and push unemployment to 10-20% within one to five years. He doubled down this January with a 20,000-word essay warning of an "unusually painful" short-term shock to labour markets, arguing that the technology is not replacing single jobs but acting as a general labour substitute for humans, and that managing it will require government intervention, possibly including progressive taxation of AI firms.

Then came the curious turn of 2026. With early data showing employment for AI-exposed workers holding relatively steady — the Yale Budget Lab found no meaningful change in unemployment for these roles since ChatGPT launched — both Amodei and Sam Altman softened their predictions. Altman declared himself "delighted to be wrong". Amodei now suggests automation may actually expand the work people do.

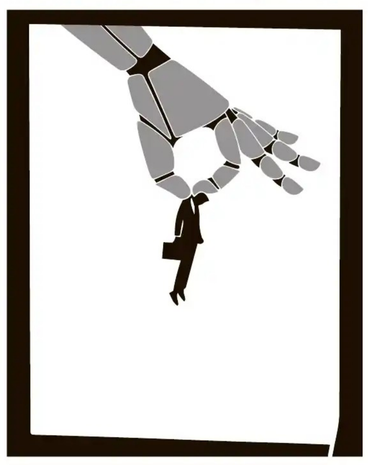
So, who is right? Look closer and the picture is uncomfortably mixed. Global tech layoffs crossed 115,000 by May 2026, nearly matching all of 2025, with Meta, Amazon, and Snap citing AI as a driver.

Entry-level technology hiring at top firms reportedly dropped 30-50% compared to 2023. And here at home, the signals are sharper still: net hiring by India's top five IT companies fell by around 7,000 in FY2026, and Bernstein wrote an open letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi warning of a deepening employment crisis as AI threatens IT jobs that anchor white-collar India.

Earlier this month, TCS Chairman N Chandrasekaran said that the company and the broader IT industry are unlikely to hire at the scale they did over the last two decades because AI agents will take over portions of current work. He explicitly stated that "the company will not be hiring the kind of numbers it used to hire" and that the old HR metric of hiring large volumes of talent would effectively disappear.

Here is what both the doom-mongers and the optimists are missing: they are debating the wrong question. The question is not just 'will AI destroy jobs?' The question needs to be re-framed as: 'Where will AI create new economic opportunities, and for whom?'

Last week, my doorbell rang. A quick commerce delivery. At my door stood Anil Sutar from Vijayapura, a



BCA graduate who came to Bengaluru looking for work, found none, and now does deliveries 14 hours a day. But his phone was full of AI apps. He was teaching himself, quietly, between one delivery and the next.

Anil is not a statistic. He is a signal.

He has the degree. He has the hunger. He has already found AI on his own. What he doesn't have is a pathway back — to Vijayapura, to his community, to a life of dignity that doesn't require him to be invisible in a city.

The entry-level white-collar ladder Amodei warned about — summarising documents, writing reports, basic coding — is precisely the ladder Anil was climbing toward. AI is sawing off its bottom rungs even as he reaches for them.

But invert the lens, and AI becomes Anil's greatest asset rather than his competitor. India holds over 65% of its population under 35, and AI-related job postings in South Asia have jumped from 2.9% to 6.5% of all vacancies, with demand for AI skills growing 75% faster than non-AI roles.

The IndiaAI Mission has committed over Rs 10,300 crore, expanding compute to 58,000+ GPUs at subsidised rates so innovation reaches Tier-2 and Tier-3 India.

Recent evidence from the Youth AI Aspirations & Adoption Report (YouGraf.JanAI) that we conducted as a primary survey of 3,005 rural youth found that 90% of respondents want access to a government-certified AI course, while only 14% currently use AI to earn an income.

The report highlights a significant gap between AI awareness and livelihood creation: rural youth are adopting AI rapidly for learning, translation, writing support, and job preparation, but relatively few have yet converted that usage into economic opportunity. The aspiration is there; the infrastructure is coming; the missing piece is the pathway.

Imagine Anil as an AI entrepreneur in his village — helping farmers, mothers, 'lakhpati didis', and small business owners navigate DPI and AI to access education, healthcare, markets, and social security; earning a meaningful income while doing it. He stops being a jobseeker. He becomes a solution-creator for his community. AI may substitute labour in the corporate office, but in the gram panchayat it multiplies the value of the same young person who carries both local trust and digital fluency. No algorithm replaces that combination.

There are millions of Anils across Bharat — BCA graduates, ITI passouts, bright young women who topped their village schools. As the NITI Aayog Governing Council charts its Viksit Bharat 2047 roadmap, my ask is simple: formally recognise community AI entrepreneurship as a pillar of inclusive human development and launch a national Jana AI Yuva Shakti Mission to bring DPI and AI to youth in every gram panchayat.

The West is debating whether AI ends work. Bharat can demonstrate that AI dignifies it. "Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high" — Tagore dreamt of that Bharat. Anil Sutar and millions of our youth deserve to live it.

One village, one young mind, one AI-powered act of service at a time. Jai Hind!

(The author is founder of JanAI and Managing Trustee, Head Held High Foundation)

RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE

The enduring quest for small change

From annas to digital payments, the coin problem persists

N RAMA RAO

Even as India transforms into a cashless society, traditional cash-based transactions continue in our day-to-day lives. In fact, they are inevitable in certain situations where digital payments are not possible. Coins are, therefore, in great demand in retail dealings. I recall some interesting experiences over the decades regarding small change.

In the late 1950s, when I was a college student, decimal coins and non-decimal coins of the old rupee-*anna* system were in simultaneous circulation in India, as the country transitioned to the metric system. The decimal coin was christened *naya paisa*, meaning new paisa. The value of the rupee remained unchanged, with 16 *annas* equalling 100 *naya paise*. Customers haggling with vegetable vendors and shopkeepers over the exact value of an *anna* in terms of *naya paisa*, however, was a familiar scene in those days. Since 1964, only decimal coins have remained in circulation, with the word *naya* no longer inscribed on them.

There has always been a coin shortage, giving rise to vexatious situations which almost every one of us faced at some time or other. Extend a Rs 50 note to a vegetable vendor to pay a bill of Rs 48, and the reply comes promptly: 'No Change'. Bus commuters are familiar with conductors demanding the exact fare because they do not have change. Sometimes, passengers had to alight without collecting the small change due to them. Even though you have waited patiently in a long queue at a cinema hall or a railway station ticket counter, you must be prepared for disappointment if you do not 'tender the exact fare'.

Having purchased provisions for Rs 1,528, I once handed over Rs 1,550. I received a Rs 20 note and a chocolate in return. When I told the shopkeeper I had no use for the chocolate and returned it, he said I could adjust the remaining Rs 2 in my next purchase. Likewise, when I pay Rs 22 for half a litre of milk or Rs 365 for half a kilo of *ghee*, I invariably lose Rs 2 or Rs 5 respectively, making me wonder why such items are not priced to the nearest 10 rupees and consumers spared the hassle.

I have encountered such incidents on many occasions. The problem is not the unwillingness of shopkeepers to return the balance due nor the relatively insignificant value of lower-denomination coins, but the ubiquitous shortage of coins.

Of late, on principle, I do not want to lose money in cash transactions, however trivial the amount may be. I, therefore, make it a point to carry coins of one, two, five, and 10 rupees. Even banks do not seem to have enough of a coin reserve. I obtain mine, courtesy of a neighbouring milk booth that I frequent.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Reform before creating new departments

Apropos 'CM unveils Praja Seve dept for grievance redressal' (June 21), instead of creating a new department for receiving and resolving public grievances, which appears to be a fine idea on paper, the Chief Minister could have focused on strengthening the existing mechanisms and appointing a minister to oversee their functioning. The state government launched the Integrated Public Grievance Redressal System five years ago as a centralised platform for residents to file grievances across more than 1,300 administrative areas. The Namma Bengaluru app is also available for city residents to lodge complaints relating to eight key public utility services. In addition, many departments and sectors have their own helplines. Without strong and sustained political commitment and corresponding administrative reforms, the new initiative is likely to result in duplication of effort and lose momentum over time. Further, it does not appear feasible for district-in-charge ministers and local MLAs to hold public meetings every week.
Kamal Laddha, Bengaluru

Cover all migrant workers

I refer to 'For building workers, dignity has a new home' (Jun 21). While it is heartening that construction workers will have residential facilities in different places, the same should be extended to all migrant workers. The authorities must also consider enrolling these workers as members of a multipurpose co-operative society through which their salaries can be disbursed. It will also help if they are given health, welfare and microfinance facilities through the society.
A K Sharif, Mysuru

Insensitive

The mega celebration by the Congress at the Palace Grounds in Bengaluru on Sunday was ill-conceived and lacked sensitivity. The gridlock it caused inconvenienced a large number of students commuting to write the NEET exam. This shows the wrong priorities of the government and scant concern for students. Self-glorification outweighs public interest. Will the authorities be held accountable for this mess?
S Nagarajan, Bengaluru

Salvage the deal

Apropos 'Iran shuts Hormuz Strait again over Lebanon fighting' (June 21), in retaliation for Israel's continued strikes against Lebanon, Iran has once again closed the Strait of Hormuz as a mark of protest. Israel's closest ally, the US, should take responsibility for salvaging the deal.
C V Aravind, Benglauru

Our readers are welcome to email letters to: **letters@deccanherald.co.in** (only letters emailed – not handwritten – will be accepted). All letters must carry the sender's postal address and phone number.

SPEAK OUT

We spent 30 years fighting Congress but it never tried to steal or finish Shiv Sena like BJP.
Uddhav Thackeray, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief

A day late and a dollar short.
Will Rogers

TO BE PRECISE

IN PERSPECTIVE

US-Iran deal and India's recovery

The fall in energy prices has boosted optimism in the economy, even as the country braces for a likely monsoon deficit

T K JAYARAMAN

After prolonged negotiations, a peace agreement aimed at restoring stability in West Asia was reached last week. The United States and Iran formally signed the agreement in Versailles, France, on June 18, ending the war.

The key features of the agreement include a 60-day ceasefire and the immediate reopening of the Strait of Hormuz for commercial shipping, which has sharply reduced global crude oil prices. As soon as the official announcement was made, Brent crude oil prices fell, reaching as low as $78 per barrel on June 18 — down from May's peak of $117.

This sudden fall in energy prices has injected new optimism into India's overall economy, while simultaneously creating a peculiar situation where we must confront challenges caused by the weather forecast of a likely monsoon deficit.

Thanks to this global geopolitical relief, India's stock market strengthened continuously over the past four days. Lower crude prices are expected to reduce costs for aviation and logistics companies, pushing up the Sensex and Nifty indices. India's foreign trade sector has also gained significant relief. With oil import costs dropping, demand for US dollars also decreased, strengthening the Indian rupee from Rs 96/USD to Rs 94.6/USD. This has helped safeguard foreign exchange reserves, reduce import costs, and strengthen India's external sector.

Domestic price indicators still pose challenges.

On June 13, official data showed India's Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation at a moderate 3.93%, below the 4% target, and well below the comfort range (4%+ 2%). However, the revised Wholesale Price Inflation (WPI) in May stood at 8.26%. Meanwhile, the newly introduced Producer Price Index (PPI) recorded a high 9.38% in May. These producer-level price pressures could spill over into consumer markets, signalling that inflationary pressures remain despite lower global crude prices. Future economic forecasts largely depend on the benefits of this crude oil price fall. However, these optimistic projections hinge entirely on how long the two-month ceasefire holds. If the US and Iran fail to reach a permanent peace agreement, crude oil prices could surge back towards $100 per barrel. In that case, India's current gains in stock markets and currency value could vanish overnight, pushing the economy back into severe inflationary stress.

On June 20, in response to Israeli strikes in Lebanon, Iran declared the Strait of Hormuz shut. This shows the fragile nature of the agreement.

Monsoon deficit

India's most pressing short-term challenge is the 35% monsoon deficit. Poor rainfall threatens agricultural output, thereby raising food prices sharply. Reduced farm production weakens rural purchasing power, lowering overall industrial demand. Exports of key crops such as rice and sugar could decline, cutting export revenues and widening the balance of payments deficit. Rising drought relief and rural employment programme costs would also strain government finances. To manage this crisis, the government and the Reserve Bank of India must act in co-ordination. The RBI should not focus only on consumer inflation, but also consider PPI data when shaping interest rate policies.

In this context, it is of interest to know the US Federal Reserve's June 17 decision to keep interest rates unchanged at 3.5%-3.75%. Despite the peace agreement lowering global inflation, geopolitical instability, trade disputes, and domestic inflation, the Fed pays attention to the risks preventing aggressive rate cuts, carefully balancing inflation risks against recessionary pressures. India must adjust trade policies to ensure the smooth distribution of essential food items. Savings from lower crude import costs should be redirected into special financial packages for drought-affected rural economies to sustain demand.

Strong foreign exchange reserves at $671.63 billion for the week ended June 12 provide an adequate import cover of approximately 11 months of imports, along with a healthy GDP growth rate. It is 6.6% this fiscal year, though below the 6.9% forecast in April.

The global crude oil savings from the US-Iran peace agreement are a boon to India's economy, but the domestic monsoon deficit is a major obstacle that reduces these benefits. In this tug-of-war between international advantages and domestic challenges, the monsoon's impact often outweighs. Oil powers a nation's machines, but rain feeds its people. Understanding this duality and channelling oil import savings into drought management is the path towards sustainable economic growth.

(The writer was a senior economist with the Asian Development Bank, Manila)

Fewer people won't necessarily save the planet

MAYA K, NEERAJ KUMAR AND SREEDEVI R S

For decades, population growth has been portrayed as one of humanity's greatest environmental challenges. Policymakers, scientists, and environmentalists have often argued that a larger population places greater pressure on natural resources, increases energy demand, and accelerates carbon emissions. A United Nations survey of 50 Nobel laureates found that more than a third considered population growth and environmental degradation are among the world's biggest challenges. The world's population has more than tripled since the 1950s, reaching nearly 7.8 billion in 2020, and is projected to exceed 8.5 billion by 2030. At first glance, the conclusion seems obvious: slower population growth should reduce pressure on the environment. However, the relationship between population and environmental impact is more complex than it appears.

While the global population continues to grow, many countries are now entering an era of demographic decline. According to UN projections, dozens of countries will experience shrinking populations in the coming decades. Europe is already witnessing this trend, while Latin America and Asia are expected to experience it in the 2050s. Japan offers one of the clearest examples. The country recorded its first population decline in the 2015 census and has continued to shrink.

Has Japan's population decline significantly reduced its energy consumption? To some extent, yes. According to data from the International Energy Agency (IEA), Japan's electricity generation in 2024 was about 8% lower than in 2000, while per capita electricity consumption declined by about 6%. Yet these changes do not tell the full story. According to scholars, the contribution of population decline to a decrease in energy consumption in Japan is limited; in the future, population decline may induce an increase in energy consumption due to the lack of productive labour, and the country may substitute capital to maintain production levels.

The limitations of population-based explanations become even clearer when comparing countries with similar population sizes but vastly different energy use levels. A study by Boston University's Institute for Global Sustainability found that Canada and Uganda have roughly similar populations, yet Canada consumes about 167 times more energy than Uganda. Likewise, although the Philippines has a population nearly 38 times larger than Qatar's, the two countries consume comparable amounts of energy. An average Qatari uses nearly 195 megawatt-hours of energy annually, while an average Filipino uses only about 5 megawatt-hours.

Similarly, China, which held the title of world's most populous country until last year, when India surpassed it, experienced its first population decline in 2022. Earlier this year, China's statistics bureau showed that the country's birth rate fell to 5.6 births per 1,000 people, the lowest rate ever. Though its fertility rate is falling, its economy still grew by 5% last year. Its electricity demand is expected to rise again in 2026, and it is still the world's single largest emitter of CO2.

These comparisons highlight an important reality: environmental impact is influenced not only by the number of people but also by how people live. Economists often describe this relationship through the IPAT framework, which states that environmental impact is shaped by population, affluence, and technology. Rising income levels and consumption patterns can increase environmental pressures even when population growth slows.

India is a good example of this trend. As a developing country, India is using more and more energy as its economy grows. According to the IEA, energy use per person in India increased by 207% between 2000 and 2024. Even though India's population is expected to start shrinking in the 2060s, India's fertility rate has already fallen to 1.9, below the replacement level of 2.1 needed to stabilise population size, and experts think energy demand may continue to grow. India's population increased from about 870 million in 1990 to around 1.45 billion in 2025. During the same period, GDP per person rose from $371 to $2,695, and electricity use per person increased from 0.27 MWh to 1.46 MWh. While the population grew by only about 70%, income per person increased by more than eight times, and electricity use per person increased by over five times.

This pattern is likely to continue in the coming decades. Although India's population is expected to peak and begin declining sometime after the 2060s, energy demand may continue to rise as incomes increase and more households gain access to energy-intensive goods and services.

The growth of air conditioning illustrates this trend. Rising incomes and increasing temperatures are expected to drive a dramatic increase in air-conditioner ownership across developing countries. India is projected to experience one of the largest increases in cooling demand over the next few decades. These are driven less by population growth than by rising consumption.

The environmental challenge of the 21st century is, therefore, not simply about how many people inhabit the planet. It is about how societies produce and consume energy, how technologies evolve, and how living standards improve. Population is an important variable, but affluence and lifestyle choices often multiply its effects. The most effective solution is the creation of cleaner energy systems, more efficient technologies, sustainable cities, and consumption patterns that reduce environmental pressures without compromising human development. Population changes slowly on its own, but lifestyle is something that policies, technology, and our choices can change. That is where the greatest opportunities for addressing climate change and resource stress are likely to be found.

(The writers are assistant professors at the Department of Economics, Christ [Deemed to be University], Bengaluru)

With secondary education and most jobs out of reach, thousands of Afghan women have turned to entrepreneurship as the only path to make money and maintain a social life

Business amid bans

ELIAN PELTIER

Ghoncha Karimi, 36, a beekeeper, checking on her bees at an orchard outside Herat City, Afghanistan. She sometimes dresses as a man when she travels to the outskirts of the city to tend to her bees. NYT

The Taliban have imposed some of the world's toughest restrictions on women and girls, but to ward off economic collapse and isolation, they have let women start businesses in Afghanistan, as long as they comply with a cascade of debilitating rules.

More than 10,000 Afghan women have business licenses — a tenfold increase in the past five years, according to the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry. With an additional estimated 120,000 working without licenses, small businesses are the largest employers of Afghan women, according to the World Bank.

But that apparent boom does little to hide the shrinking horizons for women's lives.

Those who dreamed of becoming lawyers, engineers or university professors have turned to carpet weaving, cosmetics or vocational training because they cannot work in government administration or for many nonprofits.

They also cannot run beauty salons, study midwifery or nursing, or speak with male clients, suppliers or banking officials.

The vast majority of Afghan women do not work at all — less than 7% of Afghan women were employed as of 2024, according to the UN Development Program.

Those who do work have faced growing hurdles. The harassment and arrests of dozens of women by the morality police in June led to a rare public protest.

Still, as the Taliban approach the five-year anniversary of their return to power, Afghan women have turned to entrepreneurship as one of the last ways they can support their households and find a semblance of social life.

"The only remaining hope for women in Afghanistan is business," said Behnaz Saljughi, a representative for female business owners in the province of Herat.

The 19-year-old boss

On a recent morning in a warehouse in Mazar-e-Sharif, in northern Afghanistan, some 60 women knotted, trimmed and wove rugs under the watch of their boss, Nasira Azizi, 19.

Azizi was 14 when the Taliban swept back to power in 2021 and barred millions of girls like her from studying beyond sixth grade. "I fell into depression," Azizi said about the ban on education. "At home, you see the same faces all the time."

The rug workshop opened up her world. "Here, there are at least more topics to discuss, more motivation to get the job done," she said.

Azizi launched her business with financial support from the UN Development Program, including a grant to create jobs for Afghan women who have been expelled from neighbouring Iran and Pakistan in recent years.

"Even before the Taliban came, I wanted to be an entrepreneur," Azizi said.

She now has about 450 workers in two workshops and at home.

Her two brothers handle the rugs' design and the marketing. Her father runs one of the workshops, where male employees clean the rugs before they are sold.

The rest — management, human resources, finances — falls to Azizi. "The business license is under my name," she said.

'We need bigger pots'

Roqia Rezaei, 21, said she had dreamed of becoming a mining engineer before the Taliban took over Afghanistan. Unable to pursue that field, she taught English, but the Taliban government cracked down on private tutoring, and her students dwindled.

In 2022, she founded Magnolia, a soap business in Herat, one of Afghanistan's largest cities. It now sustains her family of seven, she said.

The smell of turmeric wafted over Rezaei's workshop on a recent afternoon as her mother stirred the simmering, gluey matter that would soon become soap. Rows of saffron-infused soap bars and dropper bottles filled with black seed oil sat in an adjacent room.

The setup remains rustic — two large stockpots, no automation — but Rezaei has her eye on Iran and Tajikistan as the next frontiers for her business, which she wants to turn into an international brand by 2030. An avid reader of psychology and management books, she spoke as two dozen certificates and online diplomas pinned to a wall towered over her.

"We need bigger pots and some machines," Rezaei said.

A bee queen defies the rules

The stories of female entrepreneurs in Afghanistan come with countless caveats.

Rezaei cannot travel alone to Kabul, the capital, to sell her soap. She needs a male companion. Azizi cannot advertise the care and finesse put into the rug-making process to male clients.

They often have to rely on their husbands, fathers or brothers to do business.

Or they defy Taliban restrictions.

In Herat, Ghoncha Karimi, 39, a beekeeper, said she sometimes dresses as a man when she travels to the outskirts of the city to tend to her bees.

With her husband struggling to find jobs as a day labourer, the honey Karimi produces from her 50 beehives makes up a significant portion of the family's income. She is now known locally as the Bee Queen of Afghanistan.

But sales slumped in 2023 when the Taliban ordered her to stop receiving male clients in her shop, she said.

Twice in recent years, she lost her bees: once after the Taliban takeover when many women stayed at home out of fear, and again in 2023, when she was imprisoned for 20 days after a brawl with a Talib official over limitations on women.

"The government is active in supporting women's businesses," Karimi said. "And yet, we face more restrictions by the day."

'I'm the controller'

Afghan authorities say they encourage women to pursue vocational training programs, and they are also encouraging businesses to hire more of them, as long as the women respect the "principles of the country," according to Samiullah Ibrahimi, the spokesman for the Afghan Ministry of Work and Social Affairs. But critics say these measures are nowhere near enough.

When asked about key programs for women, Ibrahimi referred to a "committee for economic empowerment" that he said had provided work for 26 women this year — in a country of nearly 45 million people.

"Our mothers used to tell us that they worked hard so our future would be better and more peaceful," said Fariba Noori, the acting head of Afghanistan's Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry. "Our future did not become better or more peaceful. Now we tell our own children the same thing, but I don't think that will happen."

Families and conservative values are ever-present obstacles.

Waheeda Noorzai, 41, said she faced years of domestic abuse from her husband because of her professional ambitions. She has a master's degree, but her husband, she said, does not know how to read or write.

"But after fighting, you become the queen of the family," she said. "Now, all the girls in my family are at school, and my brothers say, 'My daughter should be like you.'"

Noorzai now manages two dozen female employees with hearing impairments at the Norwegian Afghanistan Committee, a nonprofit promoting access to healthcare and economic inclusion.

And her husband follows her guidance on their two daughters' educations, she said.

Rezaei started Magnolia soap when her family was in deep financial trouble. Her father, Cheraghali Rezaei, had driven several businesses to bankruptcy in the past, he said.

Yet in a lengthy interview at the family home, Cheraghali Rezaei claimed credit for the brand's success.

"I'm in charge of the marketing, and that is what matters the most. If she's a television, I'm the controller that can make her into the channel I want," he said of his daughter.

As restrictions pile up, some female entrepreneurs say the risks of doing business are simply getting too high.

Karimi, the beekeeper, was imprisoned when her daughter was only 7. When she returned, her daughter told her, "Mommy, are you really released, or am I dreaming?"

After that episode, Karimi said, "I told myself, 'Even if the Taliban hits me on the head, I will not raise my head again.'"

The New York Times

Animal-inclusive disaster planning

SURYAPRABHA SADASIVAN

India's disaster response systems have improved significantly over the last two decades. Early warning systems are sharper, evacuation protocols are more responsive, and mortality rates from major events have declined. But there remains a vulnerability that continues to shape how well rural India actually recovers from disasters: the fate of its livestock.

India has over 536 million livestock, with nearly 96% concentrated in rural areas. For millions of households, animals are central to income, nutrition and economic stability. A significant share of livestock rearing is also undertaken by women.

When livestock are lost, recovery is often slower and more expensive. Households are left to rebuild productive assets from scratch, often through debt, with impacts that can span multiple agricultural cycles.

This is where the National Disaster Management Authority's (NDMA's) recent guidelines on animal-inclusive disaster risk reduction, released in May 2026, become important. They reflect a shift in thinking, from viewing animals as incidental to disasters to recognising them as integral to how rural economies function and recover.

The timing reflects a broader shift in India's climate risk landscape. For much of 2025, extreme weather events were recorded on almost every day between January and September. The question is no longer whether such events will occur but how quickly communities can recover from them. In rural India, that recovery is often closely tied to livestock.

There is also a behavioural dimension that disaster planning has not fully accounted for. Households are often reluctant to evacuate if it means leaving animals behind. For many families, losing livestock can mean losing a primary source of income for years. Planning that does not account for this can undermine evacuation efforts themselves.

India's disaster management systems have evolved significantly over the past two decades. Integrating livestock protection into these systems is a logical next step and aligns with global approaches that increasingly recognise the importance of protecting livelihoods alongside human life.

Past disasters offer a clear reminder of what is at stake. The 2018 Kerala floods resulted in the loss of tens of thousands of cattle and large numbers of poultry. These losses fell disproportionately on households with limited asset buffers, disrupted local food systems and made recovery more uncertain.

There is also a public health dimension that is often overlooked. Post-disaster animal mortality can also increase disease risks, particularly in flood-affected areas, reinforcing the relevance of India's One Health approach.

The real opportunity now lies in implementation. The NDMA guidelines provide a framework, but their effectiveness will depend on how they are operationalised at the state and district levels. A practical way forward would be to begin with a set of high-risk districts across different hazard profiles and develop context-specific models. This would include mapping livestock populations, identifying safe evacuation routes, creating temporary shelters, ensuring access to fodder and water, and strengthening veterinary response systems.

Importantly, much of the required capacity already exists. Gram panchayats and frontline animal husbandry workers often have detailed knowledge of local conditions that could significantly strengthen disaster planning and response.

This is not just a government delivery challenge. Dairy cooperatives, insurers and philanthropic organisations can all help strengthen preparedness, response and recovery, particularly in high-risk districts.

The broader point is that disaster resilience is not just about surviving an event; it is about how quickly normalcy can be restored. In rural India, that restoration is closely tied to livestock. A household that retains its animals recovers faster. A community that protects its livestock stabilises sooner. And a disaster management system that accounts for this is, by definition, more complete.

India has built a relatively strong disaster response system through sustained institutional learning and political prioritisation. The inclusion of livestock within this framework is a continuation of that trajectory. The next step is to ensure that this intent translates into practice, district by district, in ways that are responsive to local realities.

As climate risks become more frequent and more complex, resilience will increasingly be measured not just by how many lives are saved but by how well livelihoods are protected. In that equation, animals are not a peripheral concern. They are central to how rural India absorbs shocks and rebuilds.

(The writer is a senior vice president at a policy consulting firm)

OUR PAGES OF HISTORY

50 YEARS AGO: JUNE 1976

KS Bajpai named India's envoy to Pakistan

New Delhi, June 21
Forty-eight-year-old K S Bajpai has been appointed India's Ambassador to Pakistan, it was announced here today. Pakistan's Ambassador to India will be 68-year-old Syed Fida Hassan. The two envoys are expected to take up their assignments between July 17 and 24. Today's announcement is in implementation of the May 14 agreement for establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries. Mr. Bajpai, currently India's Ambassador at The Hague, is no stranger to Pakistan.

25 YEARS AGO: JUNE 2001

Pak not enemy No 1: Jaswant

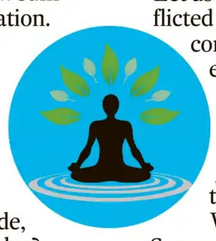
Sydney, June 21 (PTI)
External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh today said India never regarded Pakistan as "enemy number one" and asserted that Kashmir was not a territorial dispute. "Of course not. We've never regarded Pakistan as such. That's your classification. We wish Pakistan well," he said when asked during an interview to SBS Television's 'Dateline' programme, if India regarded Pakistan as enemy number one. Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, on his historic visit to Lahore, made almost exactly the same point, Mr Singh said.

OASIS | SUDHA UMASHANKER

Turning to the divine in difficult times

Life has a way of confronting us with challenges when we least expect them. Some are minor setbacks; others arrive with such force that they leave us shaken and struggling to find our bearings. These shocks come in all shapes and sizes – a sudden geopolitical disturbance; a natural calamity and the resultant damage to homes and livelihoods; the unexpected passing of a loved one; or a life-altering diagnosis that leaves one shell-shocked. We bemoan our fate and are often clueless as to how to handle the situation.

Recently, I was listening to a snippet of a talk by the eloquent Devaki Ma of the Yogi Ram Surat Kumar Ashram.



She said that whatever befalls us, we should lay it at the feet of the Divine. Once we do that, the burden lightens and strength is somehow summoned to deal with the situation. We are urged to remember that trials, along with the attendant frustration and setbacks, are all part of the Divine plan to test us, challenge us, and, in the end, transform us.

If life were one smooth ride, how would we grow and evolve?

Accepting the hurdles we encounter joyfully and with equanimity will certainly lead to clarity and resolution. We can ask for direction at such times to be guided to the right people or the right solutions so that we can surmount these obstacles.

Let us assume that a person is afflicted with some unusual health condition. If, through persistent efforts, he/she is able to identify that one expert who has successfully treated other such patients, imagine the joy, gratitude and healing that will follow.

We could also beseech the Supreme for patience to tide us over during the crisis.

Solutions do not always materialise quickly. So, while the wait may seem interminable, faith, scriptures and spirituality can be of invaluable support in helping one cope.

Lord Krishna says that our moods, habits, and reactions are influenced by forces beyond us, keeping us perpetually caught in cycles of highs and lows.

The way out is unalloyed devotion and staying connected to Him, no matter what. When there is such a bond, rising above the tumult becomes easier.

Here is what contemporary role model Sundar Pichai, CEO of Alphabet Inc and Google, said: "A person who is happy is not because everything is right in his life. He is happy because his attitude towards everything in his life is right."

FOOLPROOF SAFETY: NTA says over 7 lakh officials mobilised for conducting retest

Over 20 lakh take NEET-UG re-exam

AMRITA MADHUKALYA
NEW DELHI, DHNS

More than 20 lakh candidates appeared for the NEET-UG 2026 re-examination on Sunday across 5,440 centres in India and 14 centres abroad.

The National Testing Agency (NTA) on Sunday said in a statement that the test was conducted in 13 languages, including Hindi and English, and described the exercise as a collective national effort rather than the work of a single agency.

NATIONAL TESTING AGENCY

"NTA's attention has been drawn to a fabricated video being circulated on social media regarding NEET (UG) 2026. The video is fake and the claims it makes are false.

NTA said extensive arrangements were made for all candidates, including more than 10,000 Persons with Disabilities. Special provisions were also put in place for around 81 candidates with medical conditions, including "a child who had been in a road accident, and a child undergoing chemotherapy, who were determined not to miss an exam they had prepared for years."

The agency said multiple security measures were deployed across examination centres, including Aadhaar-based biometric and face authentication, CCTV surveillance, jammers and two-layer frisking with support from state police forces.

Command and control centres for CCTV monitoring were established at the national level at the NTA and the Ministry of Education, as well as at 34 Centrally Funded Institutions, in every state and at district collectorates, it said.

According to the NTA, the examination was conducted with support from several central ministries and agencies, including the CAPF, Ministry of External Affairs, Department of Posts, Indian Air Force and Ministry of Home Affairs.

The agency also acknowledged the role played by state governments, saying several states arranged "shade, water and food at centres, ambulances and medical facilities on standby, and in many States, free transportation for candidates on exam day".

Highlighting the scale of the exercise, NTA said around 7 lakh officials, including police personnel, observers and staff, were mobilised across the country for the conduct of the examination.

NEET-UG candidates gather at Bapu Pariksha Bhawan after appearing for the Re-NEET UG 2026 exam, in Patna on Sunday. PTI

Google Maps sends aspirants astray

MORADABAD (UP), PTI: A wrong location displayed on Google Maps caused difficulties for some NEET aspirants in Uttar Pradesh's Moradabad on Sunday as they could not reach their examination centres on time and missed the medical entrance test. Faizan Ali, a resident of Sambhal, said he relied on Google Maps to locate his examination centre. According to him, the navigation service showed an incorrect location for RN Inter College, leading him to the wrong venue. As he arrived at the actual centre after the stipulated reporting time, he was denied entry.

After Abu Dhabi centre mix-up, student appears

NAGPUR, PTI: A local student, who was initially allotted an examination centre in Abu Dhabi, appeared for the NEET retest on Sunday after the National Testing Agency (NTA) revised his centre to Nagpur amid concerns over the issue. The aspirant, Abdullah Talib, appeared for the re-examination at a school in the Ajni area.

His father, Mohammad Talib, told PTI that his son was tense and unwilling to appear for the examination. "He appeared for the examination after he was counselled," he said.

Citing his son, Mohd Talib said the question paper was tougher compared to the previous one, which was cancelled.

Not sacking Pradhan shows PM's 'incompetency': CJP

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Cockroach Janta Party's protest at Jantar Mantar entered the second day on Sunday with its founder Abhijit Dipke targeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi over NEET and CBSE misconduct.

Dipke said Modi would be considered the "most incompetent PM" if he did not sack Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

Addressing the protesters, Dipke said, "Till now, we were saying that Pradhan is an incompetent minister. Mr Prime Minister, if you are not sacking Dharmendra Pradhan, if you are not taking his resignation, then you will be the most incompetent Prime Minister in the history of India. Modi-ji, you are sharing your 'Mann Ki Baat' every week. Please listen to the 'Mann Ki Baat' of students."

Reminding the Prime Minister about the 17 students who died by suicide during the exam fiasco, Dipke said, "I want to tell you that you will not become PM with the votes of the people of Italy... You have not been made PM to eat 'jhaalmuri'... Stop eating 'Melody' (toffee) one day, having 'jhaalmuri' another day. Do the work for which you have been made the Prime Minister. Along with 'Mann Ki Baat', do 'Kaam Ki Baat' too."

Farmer solidarity

Dipke also appealed to farmers to show solidarity with the youth and make the movement a success.

Though police on Saturday denied permission to continue the protest, Dipke and a handful of supporters stayed put at Jantar Mantar. More protesters gathered at the site on Sunday morning.

Banging plates and shouting slogans against Pradhan, hundreds of protesters gathered for the second day but police repeated the drill of switching off the mikes at 5 pm and asking protesters to leave the venue.

However, CJP said on 'X', "for the second day in a row, the cockroaches will sit through the night at Jantar Mantar. We will not leave until Dharmendra Pradhan resigns. If the government thinks exhaustion will end this movement, it is mistaken. This protest will only grow bigger."

Modi delays travel to avoid inconvenience to aspirants

NEW DELHI, PTI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday delayed his travel to his residence after arriving at Delhi's IGI airport from Kolkata, taking extra care to ensure no candidate appearing in the NEET re-examination here faces any inconvenience due to traffic restrictions.

Sources said after arriving at the Delhi airport at around 1.15 pm, the PM chose to wait at the airport instead of immediately leaving for his residence at Lok Kalyan Marg.

Since the NEET examination was scheduled to begin at 2 pm, the PM decided to leave for his residence only after the exam commenced, ensuring that no student faces any inconvenience in reaching the examination centre, sources said.

Over 87% of CBSE revaluation results declared

NEW DELHI, PTI: The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) declared the revaluation results on Sunday for students who applied for verification and revaluation of their Class 12 board exam answer sheets, with over 87% of the applications announced in the first phase.

"The outcomes are being released in a phased manner, with over 87% of the total applications received being declared today. The outcomes of the remaining applications will be available in phases, and the entire process is expected to be completed soon," it said.

Students can check their updated marks on the official CBSE website results.digilocker.gov.in using their login credentials, it said.

A candidate undergoes security check before appearing for the NEET-UG re-examination at an exam centre, in Nagpur, on Sunday. PTI

Physics section trumps many aspirants; students expect lower cut-off

KOTA, PTI: Candidates who appeared for the NEET-UG re-exam on Sunday reported that the paper was comparatively tougher than the previous exam, with Physics emerging as the most challenging section.

While Biology was generally described as easy and Chemistry as moderate, many students said the Physics section was lengthy and time-consuming, and a lower cut-off may be expected.

Meanwhile, experts in Kota rated the paper above average in overall difficulty. Vinod Kumawat, subject expert and president of Allen Career Institute in Kota, said both Physics and Chemistry were conceptual in nature, with several questions lengthy and tricky.

"In Physics, question number 26 of paper code 50, based on the topic of Unit Dimension, does not have the correct answer among the options provided. Therefore, there is a possibility that bonus marks may be awarded for this question," Kumawat said.

"The questions were deep, calculative and conceptually demanding. Organic and Inorganic Chemistry were also tougher compared to the NEET exam conducted on May 3," he said.

"The rank is expected to be decided largely based on performance in Physics and Chemistry," he added.

Biology easier

In contrast, Biology was comparatively easier than the May 3 exam.

Yet, Kumawat pointed out that a question from Solanaceae in Plant Morphology was asked despite not being in the NTA syllabus. He also observed that the answer options for three Biology questions were highly confusing.

The Biology section featured a greater weightage from class 11 topics at 52 questions, against 38 from class 12.

Among Biology topics, Human Physiology accounted for the highest number of questions at 13, followed by Plant Physiology and Genetics and Biotechnology with 11 questions each. Cell Biology contributed nine questions to the paper.

Aspitant Gaurav Kumar Jha from Darbhanga, Bihar, said the overall paper was tougher than the previous one.

"Biology and Chemistry were easy, but Physics was tough as well as lengthy. The cut-off will probably drop if the paper was not leaked this time," he said, tongue-in-cheek.

Sneha Kumari, also from Bihar, said Chemistry was largely manageable but had some difficult questions from Physical Chemistry.

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ಸುಧಾ
ನಿಮ್ಮ ಸಮೀಪದ ಅಂಗಡಿಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಲಭ್ಯ
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UK's Starmer could decide on political future today

Andy Burnham's decisive poll win to parl prompts exit calls

LONDON, REUTERS

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer was considering his political future on Sunday, after rival Andy Burnham's decisive election victory to parliament prompted more ministers in the governing Labour Party to call for him to go.

Struggling with some of the lowest popularity ratings for any British leader in modern political history, Starmer could decide as soon as Monday whether to step aside or fight a leadership contest against Burnham, one source said.

The scale of victory Burnham won for a parliamentary seat in northwestern England on Friday has piled pressure on Starmer, with dozens of lawmakers and some ministers privately calling for him to set out a timetable for his departure to clear the way for the former Greater Manchester mayor.

A source with knowledge of the matter said Starmer was spending the weekend thinking about and discussing his position with his family but that an expected conversation with Burnham would clarify matters.

"Keir likes to think about things," the source said.

Adding to the pressure on Starmer, U.S. President Donald Trump predicted on his Truth Social platform that "Keir Starmer will resign as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom". Trump then repeated his view that Starmer had "failed badly" on cutting immigration and boosting North Sea oil output.

Keir Starmer. REUTERS FILE

Starmer's unpopularity was laid bare by Labour's heavy losses in local elections in May, and polls of party members indicate Burnham would win a formal leadership contest.

Should Burnham take the helm, he would become Britain's seventh prime minister in the past 10 years.

Starmer's position under threat

Sky News reported that it understood foreign minister Yvette Cooper had called on Starmer to stand down in a private conservation over the weekend. Her spokesperson did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Her apparent appeal, alongside other ministers, increased the sense that it is now a case of when, rather than if, Starmer would step aside.

Israeli soldiers in Lebanon are free to take action if under threat: Katz

Troops to remain in Lebanon as long as possible: Netanyahu

BEIRUT/JERUSALEM, REUTERS

Israeli soldiers are free to act without restriction to eliminate threats in Lebanon, Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz said on Sunday, adding troops remained in position in what Israel refers to as a security zone. A ceasefire with Iran-backed Hezbollah took effect on Friday after months of escalating violence, but on Saturday Israeli strikes killed at least 20 people in Lebanon, Lebanon's state news agency NNA reported.

Israel said the strikes were a response to projectiles fired by the Iran-backed group at its troops in southern Lebanon, prompting attacks on what an Israeli official described as "Hezbollah targets".

A displaced girl chants, as she makes her way with her family back to their homes in southern Lebanon, in Qasmiyeh, Lebanon on Sunday. REUTERS

A Hezbollah official told Reuters the group was committed to the ceasefire as long as Israel adheres to it, adding that Israeli forces do not have the right to freedom of movement in south Lebanon.

The official said Hezbollah forces have not fired on Israeli troops since 6:30 p.m. (1530 GMT) Saturday.

Security sources told Reuters Israel had also launched no major strikes on Lebanon since the same time. That represents the longest spell without major strikes since the war in Lebanon between Hezbollah and Israel began on March 2.

Iranian officials have said Lebanon is the focal point for Sunday's peace talks with the United States in Switzerland.

Hezbollah chief rejects Israeli security zone

Hezbollah chief Naim Qassem on Sunday rejected any Israeli security zone in Lebanon, after Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed his troops would remain in the country's south for "as long as necessary", reports AFP.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Sunday that Israeli forces would remain in southern Lebanon "as long as necessary", while also vowing to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

"We will remain in the security zone in southern Lebanon for as long as necessary to protect the cherished residents of the north and all the citizens of Israel... Nothing will alter that commitment," Netanyahu said.

WORLD AT A GLANCE

Pedestrians cool off under a mist sprayer installed by Paris City Hall on the 45th edition of the Fete de la Musique (France's national music festival) and during a heatwave in Paris on Sunday. AFP

Ethiopian PM's party secures win in national election

Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's Prosperity Party (PP) won a landslide victory in legislative polls held June 1, the election commission said Sunday, giving it almost 90 percent of the seats, reports AFP from Addis Ababa.

Abiy has led Ethiopia since 2018, and is increasingly criticised for growing authoritarianism, in contrast to his early years when he won the Nobel Peace Prize for mending relations with neighbouring Eritrea.

The PP was considered the overwhelming favourite in the country of 130 million, facing a divided opposition that did not field candidates in many constituencies.

The ruling Prosperity Party secured 438 of the 486 seats in the House of Peoples' Representatives, according to an AFP tally after results were announced by the chairperson of the National Elections Board (NEBE), Melatwork Hailu. The results account for roughly 90 percent of the contested seats.

Elections were held in 501 of the 547 constituencies in the country, with roughly 40 million people voting, NEBE said. A total of 54 million voters were registered.

'Journalist killed in Israeli strike'

Qatar-based Al Jazeera said on Saturday that an Israeli strike killed one of its journalists in the Gaza Strip, the latest of several people working for the broadcaster killed in the Palestinian territory since October 7, 2023, reports AFP from Doha.

An Israeli military spokesman told AFP the military "confirms it carried out a strike on Ahmed Wishah, who was a Hamas terrorist", but did not provide any evidence to support the accusation.

"Ahmed Wishah, a cameraman for Al Jazeera, has been killed in an Israeli airstrike that targeted a house in the Bureij refugee camp in central Gaza," Al Jazeera said on its website.The strike was carried out by a drone in refugee camp .

Indian man charged with fatal stabbing in London

LONDON, PTI: An Indian national has been charged with the fatal stabbing of a 26-year-old man, also an Indian, in the west London suburb of Southall, the Metropolitan Police said.

Navjot Singh, 20, was charged with murder, grievous bodily harm with intent and possessing an offensive weapon after his arrest on suspicion of the murder of Gurbhej Singh last week. The accused, Navjot Singh has been remanded in custody.

Nepal did not seek British mediation in border issue with India: PM Shah

KATHMANDU, PTI

Prime Minister Balendra Shah clarified on Sunday that the Nepal government did not seek Britain's mediation to resolve the border issue with India.

"We said that if evidence from the time of British rule (in India) is needed, we will bring it. We didn't ask for their mediation," he said while addressing the first general convention of the ruling Rastriya Swatantra Party at Chitawan district.

His comments came days after Foreign Minister Shisir Khanal told Parliament that a joint working group will address the issue of cross-border occupation between Nepal and India.

Balendra Shah.

Last month, Shah said in Parliament that Nepal has encroached on Indian territories at different places and that the Himalayan nation has involved China and the UK to resolve the issue, sparking a major controversy.

New Delhi categorically rejected any role for third parties to resolve the row.

Nepal's Foreign Ministry later said PM Shah's comments were related to no-man's land and cross-border occupation between the two countries.

Nepal and India have had an old boundary dispute over Lipulekh, Limpiyadhura and Kalapani, with both countries claiming the areas. India maintains that the territories are part of Uttarakhand and has said the issue should be addressed through bilateral dialogue.

Shah asked his opponents not to worry about the statements he made regarding the border issue.

"We will resolve the issue by holding talks with our neighbour; there is no need to worry about that," the prime minister said on Sunday.

Colombians vote in presidential runoff

BOGOTÁ, AFP: Colombians began voting in a presidential runoff Sunday, choosing between a hard-right, White House-backed lawyer and a leftist senator to decide the fate of a stumbling peace process and strained ties with Washington.

Up to 41 million voters will choose between frontrunner Abelardo de la Espriella and his leftist rival Ivan Cepeda -- the latest in a series of hyper-polarized Latin American elections.

Security issues dominated a campaign marred by guerrilla bomb attacks and the murder of a leading conservative presidential candidate.

"I have to say, there is a certain fear," 59-year-old Alex Vizcaino told AFP while voting in the Caribbean coast city of Barranquilla. "It's the first election where you feel this bit of fear." "There are a lot of fanatics. You see a lot of violence," he said. "I think everyone's hope, is that things change."

Fuel sales halted in Russian-occupied Crimea as Ukraine targets oil facilities

MOSCOW, AFP

Four people were killed and fuel sales were suspended in Russian-occupied Crimea, the Moscow-backed authorities there said on Sunday, after a massive Ukrainian barrage hit the Black Sea peninsula.

Ukraine said it targeted military and energy facilities in Crimea -- Moscow's key logistics base for its four-year military offensive -- in one of the biggest attacks on the peninsula in recent months.

"As a result of the enemy's drone attack on the Kerch peninsula, unfortunately, there are casualties among the civilian population," said Russia-backed Crimea governor Sergey Aksyonov, referring to the part of Crimea that borders Russia.

"According to the latest information, four people were killed, 28 were wounded," he added.

A drone footage shows fire and smoke rising from buildings, in what Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said was an attack on an oil depot in the city of Kerch, Crimea on Sunday. REUTERS

"Today, June 21, starting from 09:00am (0700 GMT), fuel sales at Crimean petrol stations have been suspended," said Aksyonov in a separate statement, adding that fuel would only be sold to state enterprises.

The mass raid also killed one person on a ferry and hit an oil terminal in Russia's southern Krasnodar region bordering Crimea, the authorities there said.

Part of the Crimean peninsula, which was annexed by Russia in 2014, was left without power after the attacks, local utilities company Krymenergo said.

Separately, overnight Russian strikes in eastern Ukraine killed three people.

"Last night, our long-range sanctions targeted the occupiers' military logistics, oil industry and air defence," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on social media.

Ukraine calls its retaliatory attacks on Russia and occupied territories "long-range sanctions" and denies targeting civilians.

Fuel supplies

"All of this is a just response to Russia's brutal attacks against our people," Zelenskyy continued.

He added that Ukrainian forces also struck the Crimean Bridge connecting the peninsula to Russia, as well as radar and air defence systems.

After upgrading its long-range drone capabilities, Kyiv now says it can strike at will along the land corridor through occupied southeastern Ukraine that Russia uses to supply Crimea and its forces stationed there.

Ukraine has in recent months also stepped up drone attacks on energy facilities in Russia, striking targets deep behind the front lines.

Scottish police charge man after attacks on Muslims

LONDON, REUTERS: Scottish police said on Sunday they had charged a 36-year-old man after a series of attacks in Edinburgh on Friday, which Prime Minister Keir Starmer said appeared to have an anti-Muslim motive.

Five men sustained injuries in the attacks and three required hospital treatment for non-life-threatening injuries, police had previously said.

Videos on social media showed a half-naked, tattooed, white man who appeared to be carrying a large weapon chasing an Asian man and then attempting to break his way into a restaurant, before later being handcuffed on the ground by police.

The BBC reported that the attacks appeared to have begun near a mosque in the west of the Scottish capital.

A model presents a creation from the Prada Spring/Summer 2027 Milan's Men's Fashion Week, Italy, on Sunday. REUTERS

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e-TENDER NOTIFICATION

Tenders for the following works have been invited through e-procurement by Government Tool Room and Training Centre.

Sl. No.	Bid No.	Centre Name	Name of Work
1	163	Sindhanur	Establishment of New GTTC Centre at Sindhanur, Raichur District.

Tender documents will be available on the e-portal **from 23.06.2026** and Pre-bid meeting is scheduled **on 13.07.2026 at 11.30 AM.** The last date for submission of tender in the e-portal **is 23.07.2026 before 5:30 PM.** For more details, please visit the e-procurement portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** or contact the helpline number: +91 9240214000, +91 9240214001.

Sd /- Executive Engineer

Britain's King Charles to reveal personal tax bill: Reports

LONDON, AFP: King Charles III will reveal his personal tax bill in a bid to improve transparency, Buckingham Palace told UK media on Saturday, as royal finances come under increasing public scrutiny.

British monarchs are legally exempt from paying certain taxes, though they have paid some duties on a voluntary basis for decades.

They also have no obligation to disclose their tax bills, but recent scandals surrounding the disgraced former prince Andrew have thrust the royal family's finances into the spotlight.

Charles will become the first monarch to share his personal tax information, a Buckingham Palace spokesperson told the Press Association.

Coalition government set for PoK's Gilgit-Baltistan

ISLAMABAD, PTI: The Pakistan Peoples Party will form the government in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir's Gilgit-Baltistan with the support of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz under a power-sharing formula, mirroring the arrangement at the federal level, a media report said on Sunday.

India maintains that the entire Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, including Gilgit-Baltistan, are integral and inalienable parts of India by virtue of the "complete, legal and irrevocable accession" of Jammu and Kashmir to India in 1947.

India lodged a strong protest with Pakistan over the so-called elections in the region on June 7, maintaining that Gilgit-Baltistan is part of Indian territory that has been "illegally and forcibly" occupied by Pakistan.

Following the polls, the PPP emerged as the largest party, with 12 seats in the so-called 24-member Gilgit-Baltistan assembly.

The PPP and PML-N decided to form a coalition government in Gilgit-Baltistan based on "mutual trust, consensus and consultation," Dawn newspaper reported, citing a press release.

According to a statement, local PPP and PML-N leaders agreed on a proposed power-sharing formula following a consultation meeting, under which the so-called chief minister will be from the PPP, while the governor and the leader of the opposition will be from the PML-N.

"The decision of the PML-N's central leadership to support PPP has been endorsed by the local leadership," PML-N regional chief Hafeez Hafeezur Rehman said.

Thousands mark Yoga Day worldwide under 'Healthy Ageing' theme

BEIJING/NEW YORK, PTI

From Tokyo's historic temples to the iconic Times Square in New York, yoga enthusiasts across the world came together on Sunday to celebrate the International Day of Yoga, reaffirming the ancient Indian practice's growing appeal as a pathway to health, balance and well-being.

International Day of Yoga (IDY) is celebrated globally on June 21 every year, since its adoption by the United Nations in 2014.

This year's celebrations, themed "Yoga for Healthy Ageing", highlighted yoga's relevance in promoting physical fitness, mental resilience and holistic wellness at every stage of life.

In the land of the rising sun, Japan, more than 2,100 yoga enthusiasts joined celebrations organised by the Indian Embassy at the historic Tsukiji Hongan-ji Temple in Tokyo. "Despite the rain, with the motto 'Yoga together, rain or shine!', the venue was filled with energy and smiles," the Indian Embassy in Tokyo said in a post on X.

Yogis participate in a yoga class during the 24th annual 'Solstice in Times Square: Mind Over Madness Yoga' event to celebrate the summer solstice in New York City, US, on Sunday. REUTERS

On the other end of the world, Yoga enthusiasts from diverse nationalities gathered at iconic Times Square in New York to celebrate IDY.

KARNATAKA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED
(CIN: U40109KA1999SGC025521)

No. EEE/PND/AEE-3/AE-1/2026-27/652-53 Dated : 16.06.2026

PUBLIC CAUTION NOTIFICATION

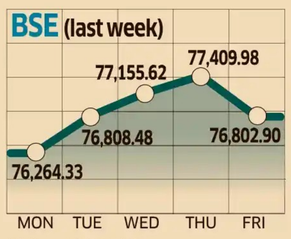
It is hereby notified for the information of the General Public that, newly established 2x31.5MVA, 66/11kV GIS sub-station at Nagarur village along with associated 66kV 1000Sqmm Double LILO(4-Circuits) Underground Cable from existing 66kV Nelamangala-Widia Line near BGS School (Proposed for DC DRAKE Conversion) connecting to proposed 66/11kV GIS sub-station at Nagarur village for a route Length of 0.270Kms in Bengaluru North Taluk, Bengaluru Urban District will be energized **on or after 26.06.2026.**

Hence the General Public/Village Panchayat's/State Government /Private Organizations are hereby informed to keep away from the above EHT UG cable route and not to undertake any excavation in the above UG cable route.

Any untoward incidents or accidents which may occur during the course of excavation/executing work by anybody/agency along the cable route without following guidelines, **the KPTCL will not be held responsible** and damage charges for the KPTCL assets shall be borne by the executing body/agency only.

Sd/- Executive Engineer (Ele),
Projects - North Division, K.P.T.C.L,
A.R.Circle, Bengaluru.

BSE (last week)



*Data as of June 19

TOP GAINERS		TOP LOSERS	
TRENT	16.32%	INFY	-5.79%
ETERNAL	8.37%	TCS	-1.62%
INDIGO	6.69%	TECHM	-1.30%
TITAN	5.64%	KOTAKBANK	-1.10%
BEL	5.07%	ASIANPAINTS	-0.46%

NSE (last week)

TOP GAINERS		TOP LOSERS	
TRENT	16.35%	TMPV	-7.65%
ETERNAL	8.41%	INFOSYS	-6.67%
HDFC LIFE INS	6.57%	TCS	3.09%
TITAN CO	5.64%	CIPLA	-2.63%
SBI LIFE INS	5.52%	TECHM	-2.53%

Sensex (52-week) ▼

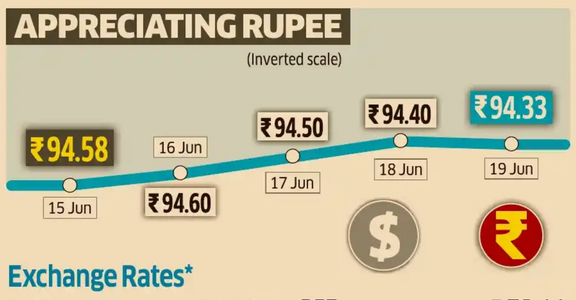
Jun 19, 2025: 81,361.87 | Jun 19, 2026: 76,802.90 | -5.60%

Nifty (52-week) ▼

Jun 19, 2025: 24,793.25 | Jun 19, 2026: 24,013.10 | -3.15%

10-year Bond yield 6.85%

APPRECIATING RUPEE



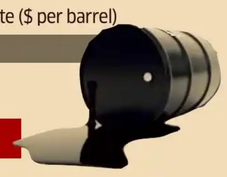
Exchange Rates*

Dollar	₹94.33	SGD	₹73.11
Pound	₹124.60	Yen (100 units)	₹58.55
Euro	₹108.02		

*Price at which banks sell

Crude Oil Rate ($ per barrel)

BRENT CRUDE
$80.57*
▲ 0.90%



*Rate as of Jun 19

Bengaluru fuel pump price*

(Retail)

Petrol* ₹110.93 ₹0% ↔

Diesel* ₹98.80 ₹0% ↔

*Rates as of Jun 20 #Rate change compared with yesterday

Commodity watch

COFFEE

Category	Rate (Rs per 50 kg)*
Arabica Parchment	₹22800 - 23300
Arabica Cherry	₹12750 - 14250
Robusta Parchment	₹17700 - 18300
Robusta Cherry	₹9400 - 10200

*Rates as on Jun 18

Other Commodities

Silkworm cocoon (Rs per kg)*

Bivoltine (BV)	₹712
Cross Breed (CB)	₹641

*Average rates as on Jun 19

ONGC is now a 'gas-and-oil' company

NEW DELHI, PTI: Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) should increasingly be seen as a "gas-and-oil" company rather than an oil-and-gas producer, its chairman Arun Kumar Singh said, highlighting a strategic shift as natural gas output outpaces crude oil.

"Gas is now slightly more than oil in our portfolio," Singh told analysts, adding that ONGC's future growth will be driven largely by gas production even as crude output remains broadly flat without major new discoveries.

Singh said gas is emerging as the dominant growth driver for the state-run explorer, with rising domestic demand, supportive pricing reforms and new field developments pushing production higher.

"Gas is a more valued fuel in the Indian context, and ONGC is gradually becoming a more gas-heavy company," Singh said, adding that gas output already exceeds oil and will continue to expand over the coming years.

While oil production is likely to remain flat, gas output will rise as newer fields are put into production. With one of the best pricing in the world, gas is now a more lucrative portfolio, he said.

"ONGC produces and sells more gas than oil. In fact, gas is now a little more than oil," he pointed out.

Singh said gas is becoming increasingly attractive relative to oil due to pricing reforms, with 'new well gas' linked to 12% of crude prices, and described India's rising gas demand, including from transport as a key structural driver.

He added that while oil production is likely to remain broadly flat without major discoveries, ONGC's growth trajectory will increasingly be "gas-led", reinforcing its transition toward a more diversified energy portfolio.

ONGC's exploration and production (E&P) business now accounts for roughly two-thirds of the group, with gas output already exceeding oil and expected to expand further in the coming years. He said government policy support, including reduced royalties, continued market-linked pricing reforms and a push to fund deepwater exploration, has improved sector economics and left more revenue with upstream producers.

Singh noted that 'new well gas' production is rising sharply and already accounts for about a quarter of total gas output, and added that it could reach 30-36% in the near term and eventually dominate ONGC's gas portfolio as mature fields decline.

He said ONGC expects annual gas production growth of around 7-8%, supported by new projects, including Daman Upside Development Project, Discovered Small Field Policy fields and offshore developments, such as 98/2 wells, many of which are scheduled to come online over the next fiscal year.The company continues to drill around 500 wells annually, including exploratory and producing wells, and reported a reserve replacement ratio of more than 1.1 in FY25-26, indicating replenishment of produced reserves.

India Inc is profitable. So why isn't it investing?

Good jobs that come with new factories, warehouses, showrooms turn elusive

ANDY MUKHERJEE
BLOOMBERG OPINION

Corporate profits are becoming an increasingly crucial driver of India's economy. Yet it isn't a chest-thumping accomplishment in policymaking. If anything, it's the opposite because those surpluses aren't being plowed back into new physical assets.

The aggregate net income of listed Indian firms is approaching a record 6% of GDP. Even so, their capital expenditure has remained flat, hovering at 3.6-3.7% of GDP.

The dwindling share of India Inc in the total pie of national investment is problematic. The good jobs that come with new factories, warehouses, and showrooms are becoming elusive. Since wages support many more people than dividends or stock-market gains, inequality is worsening.

A contrast with neighboring China shines a light on India's challenge. Listed Chinese-domiciled companies have kept their share of profits in GDP — which at $20 trillion is five times bigger than India's — steady at about 4%. Yet mainland firms are investing amounts that approach or even exceed their combined net income.

That's despite concern both at home and abroad. President Xi Jinping has declared war on "involution", or excessive competition in industries like electric vehicles, solar panels, and even AI models. In markets overseas, particularly Europe, there's anxiety over local firms' inability to compete against China's overproduction. But consumers globally aren't complaining. Amid ballooning charges for running Western autonomous coding agents, the Chinese tech sector's heavy investment in low-cost AI models holds the key to lower costs in a potentially inflationary world.

The question then is why India Inc is being so stingy. After all, the political environment can't be more stable. Gone are the messy democratic transitions of the past. Prime Minister Narendra Modi just surpassed Jawaharlal Nehru's record for the longest unbroken hold on power since the first post-Independence election. The Opposition is cowed and beaten. Something resembling a single-party state has already arrived. Since that's what corporate titans wanted, why aren't they investing to make India the world's next factory like China?

China has already overtaken the average living standards that prevailed in the US when economist John Kenneth Galbraith was writing The Affluent Society, a slim 1958 volume whose core message seems to have resonated more with planners in Beijing than politicians in Washington. Galbraith argued that great private wealth coexisting with public squalor, lawlessness, poor-quality education, and healthcare — all of which is India's present reality — isn't a trait of an affluent society, regardless of how rich the corporate sector is.

Intuitively, politicians in New Delhi know this. Attacked by "cockroaches" — the self-assumed identity of a youth movement looking to lodge its protest over unfair exam results — the state finds its legitimacy corroded by the poor quality of publicly provided services.

India's per-capita real income is less than half of 1950s America. What's more, the demographic clock is ticking. In about two decades, the working-age population will peak. So what should be the plan? An economy perpetually trapped in scarcity — because the state lacks the money to invest and the private sector the will? Or should New Delhi emulate Beijing and aspire for mass affluence? The choice has to be made now and not when the society has already started ageing.

Despite liberal tax breaks and relaxed labour laws, India Inc can't find its animal spirits. It may well be that the four fortunes widely considered to be at the helm of India's national team — Mukesh Ambani, Gautam Adani, the Tata Group, and Sajjan Jindal of the JSW Group — have a view on what's expected of them, and what they can hope to get in return from the ruling political class.

The Adani Group claims that its $16 billion capital expenditure across utilities, transport, energy, and other infrastructure assets in the last financial year is the largest ever by any Indian company. While both Ambani and Adani are investing in large data centers, Tata is trying to script a semiconductor manufacturing story. Jindal, the country's largest steelmaker, has an ambitious plan for capacity expansion.

Go down the pecking order, however, and smaller corporate empires are retreating into safer options that don't require research, innovation, or heavy investments. Take Godrej Industries Group, which started off in 1897 as a maker of high-quality locks and later expanded into soap, food, chemicals, and property development. But for Pirojsha Godrej, the 45-year-old chairman-designate, the next big thing is wealth management.

Some other millennial and GenZ owners of successful firms are getting out of the game altogether by selling out to private equity and parking their money in family offices. Let someone else create the hard assets that will unleash shared prosperity.

A view of the first phase of Adani's multi-billion redevelopment. Dharavi's central location in Mumbai has made it one of the city's most-valuable real estate zones. While many residents welcome the prospect of better housing, sanitation, and infrastructure, others fear the loss of Dharavi's distinctive community fabric and its informal economy. GETTY IMAGES

Who has the better balance?

India Inc's profits are surging, but Chinese firms are reinvesting their earnings

Note: *Based on an analysis of all listed companies domiciled in India and China Source: Bloomberg

'Focus on training people to govern AI, not just technical AI skills'

UMA KANNAN
BENGALURU, DHNS

Deloitte India has opened its dedicated SAP Delivery Centre in Bengaluru, which will support SAP and joint customers across the end-to-end transformation lifecycle, spanning innovation, architecture, engineering, implementation and managed evolution of enterprise solutions. The centre with over 1,000 professionals will add 300-500 AI specialists over the next 12-24 months. Sandeep Poojary, Partner, Deloitte South Asia, told *DH* that they are currently in an aggressive hiring mode.

"Based on the demand we have and the discussions we are having with SAP, we are looking at scaling AI talent by another 500 in the near future. Apart from that, we are also tying up with universities to see how we can scale up university graduates in their final semester who are specialising in AI," Poojary said.

The company is also looking at how they can embed AI or Agentic AI into the business applications that SAP or its clients have, and then how they can transform the ways of working, the operating model, the delivery model, and how agents can talk to each other in an end-to-end business process.

"We want to make sure that this entire vision of SAP's Autonomous Enterprise is embedded in each and every client wherever we are working with SAP," he said, adding that they are currently seeing the highest traction in the finance and automotive industries, as well as the supply-chain sector.

Supply chain, finance, and automotive industries are moving faster currently, followed by the oil and gas sector. "That is how adoption is progressing. However, we are looking at completely making enterprise applications autonomous across the board," he added.

Talking about cloud, AI and return on investment (ROI), Poojary mentioned that ROI from AI-led transformation is significantly higher than what clients are currently experiencing. If organisations want to fully-automate their enterprises with AI, they should move to the cloud.

"That is the future and vision. At the same time, there are several reasons why some clients may not move immediately. They are evaluating the commercial model, the ease of doing business, and how AI can actually deliver productivity gains and efficiency gains. Many clients are still trying to understand whether the cost of AI will justify the move to the cloud and whether the overall value-addition is significant enough. With SAP introducing its new Autonomous Enterprise framework through the Business Application Platform, it provides a strong boost and confidence-building mechanism for clients to move to the cloud and become AI-led enterprises," he explained.

AI engineers moving from hard work to smart work

If enterprise applications in SAP are taken into consideration, many coding skills, whether application development, Java, or related coding skills, are already being optimised by 70-80% through AI. Especially with cloud adoption, the company is seeing significant optimisation through the models that are coming into the market.

"What we started doing last year was cross-training our existing talent in AI skills. AI is different from traditional technology development. Earlier, success depended heavily on logic-building skills and deep coding expertise. Today, many of those activities are increasingly being supported through the LLM (large language model) layer. What becomes important now is understanding how LLMs work and understanding how code generated by LLMs needs to be implemented and governed. These are the skills that matter," Poojary said, adding that all 1000-plus employees in the organisation are AI-trained.

"Internally, we have ensured that everyone can use AI. We have enabled cloud capabilities across the organisation, and everyone is using our LLM platforms in their day-to-day work. As a result, they are AI-enabled and can effectively work with AI technologies. Also, AI engineers are moving from hard work to smart work. They need to understand how to use AI in ways that improve their daily productivity," he further said.

India, US to hold ministerial-level trade agreement talks this week

NEW DELHI, PTI: US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer and Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal will hold two-day talks this week on the first phase of the bilateral trade agreement (BTA).

Piyush Goyal

"For the US trade deal talks, tomorrow my counterpart is coming to Delhi," Goyal told reporters in Mumbai.

The meeting followed chief negotiator-level discussions on the pact held earlier this month (June 2-4) here in the national capital.

Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal has recently stated that the discussions between the two ministers are expected to be centred around giving final touches to the framework deal.

On June 5, Goyal said India and the US are moving towards closing all the open ends of the interim trade agreement, and both sides are likely to execute the "very, very vibrant" first phase of the BTA by the middle of next month.

DH INTERVIEW

'Physical AI will redefine how industries run, compete, and scale in the years ahead'

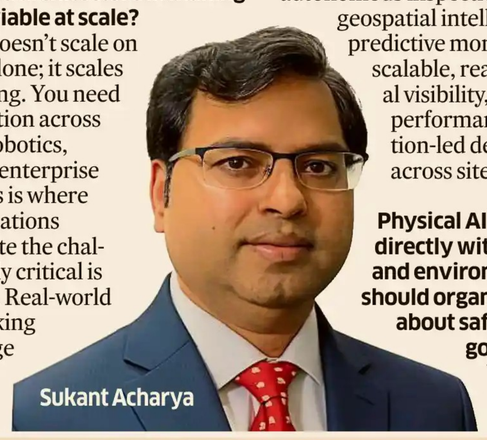
Physical AI is drawing attention across organisations because it can see, move and interact with the real world, unlike traditional AI. New models are learning physics and motion from video data. Indian IT services firms are betting on this trend, helping clients deploy robots and AI in logistics, healthcare and manufacturing. Last year, HCLTech in partnership with NVIDIA, launched an innovation lab in Santa Clara, California, to help enterprises explore, incubate and scale industry applications of physical AI and cognitive robotics. The company's physical AI solutions combine robotics, autonomous systems and intelligent edge technologies with AI, simulation and digital twins. In an interview with **Uma Kannan** of *DH*, **Sukant Acharya**, Head of Physical AI Practice at HCLTech, explains how the company is deploying physical AI and why it is important for organisations to think about governance, trust and safety. *Edited excerpts:*

How is Physical AI the next enterprise frontier compared to traditional AI/ automation?

Enterprise AI has largely been about insights and automation within digital systems. Physical AI changes that equation; it brings intelligence into the real world. Physical AI represents the convergence of AI, engineering, and operations. It is where intelligence meets execution and it will redefine how industries run, compete, and scale in the years ahead. We are moving from AI that optimises workflows to AI that executes outcomes on factory floors, in warehouses, across critical infrastructure. This is not an incremental step. It is a shift from programmed automation to systems that can perceive, decide, and act autonomously in dynamic environments. For example, for a large port and terminal operations company, HCLTech has deployed its VisionX platform on the edge to monitor the safety of its assets and employees, leading to 75% reduction in safety and security incident-related costs/losses and 99% reduction in worker accidents.

How important are engineering depth, system integration, and edge-to-cloud architecture in making physical AI viable at scale?

Physical AI doesn't scale on algorithms alone; it scales on engineering. You need deep integration across AI models, robotics, sensors, and enterprise systems. This is where most organisations underestimate the challenge. Equally critical is architecture. Real-world decision-making demands edge intelligence for speed and autonomy, while the cloud drives learning and orchestration at scale. The winners in physical AI will be those who can bring together engineering depth with a seamless edge-to-cloud fabric, not just deploy models. For a mining major, HCLTech is delivering an integrated ecosystem combining autonomous inspections, digital twins, geospatial intelligence and predictive monitoring, enabling scalable, real-time operational visibility, improved asset performance and simulation-led decision-making across sites.



Sukant Acharya

Physical AI systems interact directly with people, assets, and environments. How should organisations think about safety, trust, and governance?

When AI moves into the physical world, the stakes are fundamentally higher. These systems interact with people, environments, and critical assets. Trust cannot be an afterthought — it has to be built into the system itself. This means governance by design:

- Safety built into control systems
- Real-time monitoring and fail-safes
- Clear human override mechanisms

Enterprises need to treat physical AI as a safety-critical system, not just a technology deployment. Without trust, scale won't happen.

Can physical AI be industrialised without disrupting existing infrastructure and operations? What does that transition look like in practice?

The transition to physical AI does not require a rip-and-replace approach. The most-effective path is evolutionary: Start with simulation and digital twins to de-risk deployment; augment existing systems with intelligence, rather than replacing them; and use modular architectures to integrate with current infrastructure.

Physical AI can be industrialised in a way that is incremental, controlled, and ROI-driven. The focus should be on integrating intelligence into existing operations — not disrupting them.

How important is ecosystem collaboration, across hyperscalers, OEMs, and industry partners, in accelerating physical AI adoption?

Physical AI is not a single-vendor game; it is an ecosystem play by design. You need hyperscalers for AI platforms, OEMs for robotics and hardware, and partners for domain and integration expertise.

No single organisation can deliver this stack end-to-end. Open, collaborative ecosystems will be critical in accelerating adoption, reduce complexity, and unlock scale. Enterprises that embrace this model will move faster and with less risk.

Retirement planning – Building a resilient financial ecosystem that holds

In a landscape where structured social security is absent for majority of the workforce, which indicates India as a fundamentally a non-pension-friendly nation, retirement planning can no longer be approached loosely. It must be approached as a resilient financial ecosystem to withstand the compounding erosion of inflation, skyrocketing healthcare costs, and expanding life expectancies.

While the traditional corporate calendar points to 58-60 years as the retirement age, financial independence is deeply personal. Rather than looking at the calendar, true retirement readiness is determined by three data-driven markers:

1. Debt-free status (all high-interest liabilities fully liquidated),
2. Independent health cushion (a comprehensive standalone health insurance policy), and
3. The replacement ratio (the investment portfolio should be mathematically optimised to generate an income adjusted for inflation across a life expectancy of 85-90 years).

The ultimate mathematical leverage belongs to those who begin in their 20s. Starting early provides the longest runway allowing relatively modest and consistent investments to grow exponentially over a 30-40-year horizon. However, if you missed that window, do not succumb to analysis paralysis or retroactive regret. If you are starting in your 30s, 40s, or 50s, the playbook simply requires tactical adjustments by prioritising ruthlessly, optimising aggressively and scaling up your contributions.

To protect your future self, you must view life goals through a structural hierarchy. You cannot fund long-term peace of mind if your base is unstable. You can easily secure a loan for a child's education, a vehicle, or a home, but cannot get a loan to fund your retirement, which means it should be the ultimate non-negotiable life goal. Build the base first with an emergency fund covering 24-36 months of living expenses, a term life insurance policy (if you have dependents), and an independent health cover. Above that sits retirement funding, seeded from your very first paycheque and compounded without interruption. Only then come the time-bound goals: home, child's education, and wedding.

Building a formidable corpus requires committing at least 20-30% of your net monthly income to a diversified mix of equity, debt, and gold. To outpace India's structural inflation and generate true wealth-building returns, your allocation must follow an aggressive, age-targeted path which requires you to maintain greater than 70-80% exposure into equities, especially when you are in your 20s and 30s. This not only helps maximise compounding velocity during your peak earning years, but also systematically manages risk and volatility with time as you mature.

RUSHABH DESAI
FOUNDER, RUPEE WITH RUSHABH INVESTMENT SERVICES

Inflation is a silent executioner of wealth. In India, headline numbers rarely tell the full story as lifestyle inflation hits differently by segment. On an average, the middle class faces 5-7% annual inflation on their core spendings; the upper-middle class experiences 7-10% as discretionary spending rises and the wealthy households endure 10-15% driven by premium goods and luxury choices. Medical and education inflation in India alone is running between 10-15% annually. Because of this compounding drain, running a flat monthly systematic investment plan (SIP) is a mathematically losing battle. To outpace lifestyle inflation and truly secure your future, you must implement an annual SIP step-up of 10-15% anchored to your salary increments. As your standard of living scales, your investment engine must scale with it.

As retirement approaches, your strategy must shift from accumulation to deliberate preservation. In the final years, clear every high-interest debt before your last salary. Execute a structured glide path by systematically moving capital from high-volatility equities into secure fixed-income assets to immunise your corpus against a poorly-timed market downturn. Once active income stops, divide your wealth into two functional buckets: Bucket 1 — Park enough in safe and liquid products to fully cover living expenses for the first 4-5 years. Bucket 2 — allocate the larger remaining portion into low-moderate-risk hybrid products and leave it completely untouched for 4-5 years to compound, then trigger a systematic withdrawal plan (SWP) to replenish Bucket 1 on an ongoing basis. This two-bucket framework ensures your day-to-day survival is never held hostage to short-term market corrections, while giving your core wealth the uninterrupted time it needs to compound and deliver inflation protection and tax efficiency for the rest of your life.

FYERS to launch Category III AIF in Q2; aims to raise Rs 1,000 crore

BENGALURU, DHNS: Bengaluru-based technology-first brokerage and investment platform FYERS is set to launch its flagship Category III fund called 'FYERS Vantage Fund' during the second quarter of FY27. It will be a market cap-agnostic & sector-agnostic flexicap, India-focused equities fund that will aim to deliver higher returns than the benchmark, said a top company executive.

"As markets have become more volatile, the goal is to have a mid-term outlook to the markets with the aim of capitalising on large emerging trends in the economy," said Tejas Khoday, Co-founder and CEO of FYERS.

The company aims to raise a corpus of Rs 1,000 crore under this fund.

"Unlike any other asset management firm in India, FYERS Assets has a fee structure with a 1.5% management fee and a hurdle of 15% (highest in the industry), beyond which we charge a modest 15% performance fee. The key USP in our pricing is that we are the only asset management firm with a 'Deferred Management Fee Clawback' model. It's a client-aligned fee structure aiming to make money when the investor makes money," Khoday said.

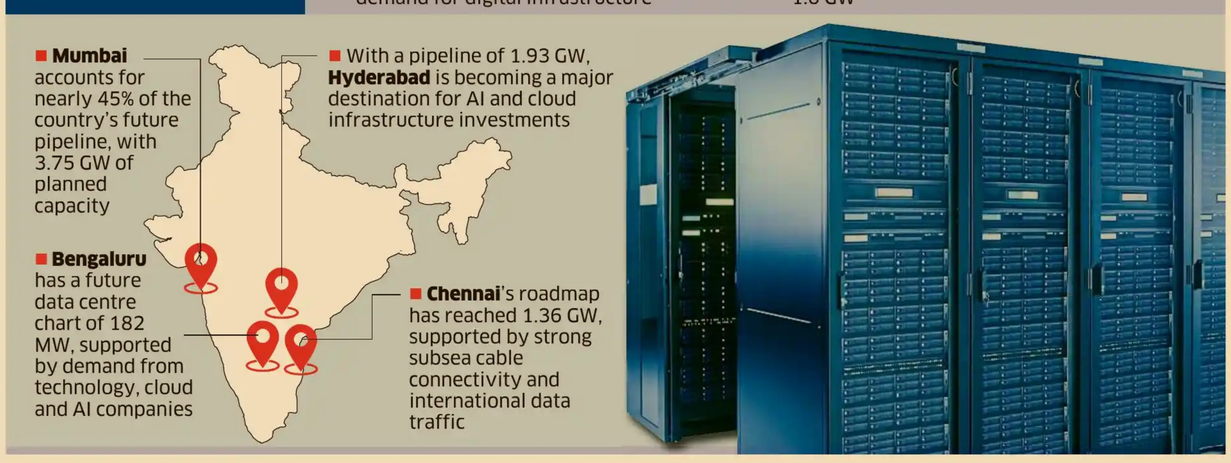
"For example, if we deliver negative returns/lose our investors' capital, FYERS Assets offsets the management fee levied to the customer against the performance fee of future year/s," he added.

The primary target audience are investors who are annoyed by paying fees to fund managers, regardless of their performance. The idea of investing in PMS/AIF is to compensate fund managers for superior performance, Khoday said.

DATA CITIES

India's data centre sector is entering a phase of rapid expansion, with AI, cloud adoption and data localisation driving an unprecedented pipeline of new capacity across major markets.

- Future data centre pipeline has grown to **8,326.6 MW** (8.33 GW), driven by rising demand for digital infrastructure
- Planned pipeline is over 5 times larger than India's current operational capacity of about 1.6 GW


Mumbai accounts for nearly 45% of the country's future pipeline, with 3.75 GW of planned capacity
With a pipeline of 1.93 GW, Hyderabad is becoming a major destination for AI and cloud infrastructure investments
Bengaluru has a future data centre chart of 182 MW, supported by demand from technology, cloud and AI companies
Chennai's roadmap has reached 1.36 GW, supported by strong subsea cable connectivity and international data traffic

AI fuels India's next data centre boom

322.4 MW of data centre capacity under construction, pipeline crosses 8.3 GW

MRITYUNJAY BOSE
MUMBAI, DHNS

India's data centre industry is entering a new phase of hyper-growth, driven by the explosive rise of artificial intelligence (AI), cloud computing and data localisation requirements, with the country's future development pipeline swelling to an estimated 8.33 GW — more than five times its current operational capacity.

According to a report by Knight Frank India, the scale of planned investments signals a major transformation in India's digital infrastructure landscape as hyperscalers, cloud service providers, AI operators and institutional investors race to build capacity for the next generation of computing demand.

India currently has 322.4 MW of data centre capacity under construction and another 2,920.2 MW in committed projects. A further 5,406 MW is at the early development stage, taking the total future pipeline to 8,326.6 MW (8.33 GW).

The report suggests that AI-led demand is becoming the biggest catalyst for the sector, as companies require significantly larger computing power, storage and processing capabilities than conventional cloud applications.

"India's data centre growth story is increasingly becoming a tale of regional specialisation," said Viral Desai, International Partner and Senior Executive Director, Knight Frank India.

While Mumbai continues to anchor hyperscale deployments due to its connectivity advantages, Hyderabad is emerging as a preferred AI infrastructure destination, and Chennai is strengthening its position as a strategic gateway for international digital traffic, he said.

Mumbai remains India's data centre capital

Mumbai continues to dominate India's data-centre ecosystem, accounting for nearly 45% of the country's future pipeline.

The city has a total development pipeline of 3.75 GW, comprising 173 MW under construction, 1.54 GW in committed projects and 2.21 GW in early-stage developments.

Its leadership is underpinned by extensive fibre connectivity, robust power infrastructure, proximity to financial institutions and multiple international subsea cable landing stations that connect India with global data networks.

Hyderabad emerges as AI hub

Hyderabad has consolidated its position as India's second-largest future data centre market, with a pipeline of 1.93 GW.

The city has 32.7 MW under construction, 633.5 MW in committed developments and nearly 1.3 GW in the early-stage pipeline.

Industry observers attribute Hyderabad's rapid rise to proactive state policies, lower operating costs and increasing investments by global technology companies building AI and cloud infrastructure.

Chennai strengthens connectivity role

Chennai's future pipeline has reached 1.36 GW, reinforcing its importance as India's digital gateway to Southeast Asia.

The city benefits from strong subsea cable connectivity, competitive power tariffs and favourable policy support, making it increasingly attractive for international operators.

NCR, Pune and Bengaluru expand

Among other markets, Delhi-NCR has a development pipeline of 541.4 MW, followed by Pune with 425.6 MW, and Bengaluru with 182 MW. Meanwhile, Kolkata's future pipeline currently stands at 133.4 MW.

Knight Frank noted that the significant proportion of early-stage projects — nearly two-thirds of the overall pipeline — reflects growing investor confidence in India's long-term digital economy prospects.

New infrastructure cycle

Industry experts believe that the country is entering a fresh data centre expansion cycle, driven by the convergence of AI adoption, enterprise digitisation, cloud migration and regulatory requirements around data localisation.

With the future pipeline already exceeding 8 GW against a current live operational capacity of about 1.6 GW, India is positioning itself among the world's fastest-growing data centre markets and could emerge as a major global hub for hyperscale, cloud and AI infrastructure over the next decade.

WEEK AHEAD

Equities expected to maintain positive bias

Last week, markets witnessed rebound due to lower oil prices

SIDDHARTHA KHEMKA

Indian equities are expected to maintain a positive bias this week, supported by easing geopolitical tensions, improving global sentiment and a sharp correction in crude oil prices. A key positive development on the geopolitical front was the US decision to lift its naval blockade on Iran following the signing of a 14-point US-Iran Memorandum of Understanding. The agreement centres around the phased reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, restoration of commercial shipping, a 60-day ceasefire extension and a framework for negotiations on sanctions, nuclear issues and regional security. While the US Federal Reserve kept interest rates unchanged, its latest guidance retained a relatively hawkish tone, with policymakers indicating the possibility one rate hike this year.

Last week, equity markets witnessed a strong rebound as improving risk appetite and lower crude oil prices drove broad-based buying across sectors. The Nifty50 gained 2% to close at 24,013, while broader markets outperformed, with the Nifty Midcap100 and Nifty Smallcap100 advancing 3% each, reflecting improved risk appetite and broad-based participation across segments.

Sectorally, performance was largely positive. Nifty Consumer Durables (+6%) emerged as the top gainer, supported by expectations of improving discretionary demand, easing input cost concerns and strong summer-season demand trends. Nifty Bank (+2%) also posted healthy gains on improving credit growth and easing macro concerns.

Crude oil and currency trends have turned supportive for domestic markets. Brent crude corrected nearly 9% during the week to around $79 per barrel, its lowest level in four months, while the Indian rupee strengthened by about 78 paise to 94.35 against the US dollar, reflecting optimism around the US-Iran peace framework and the gradual reopening of shipping routes through the Strait of Hormuz. Market volatility also eased significantly, with India VIX declining 13%, indicating a reduction in investor anxiety and a more constructive near-term outlook.

Developments on the trade front also remain encouraging. The European Commission indicated that the India-EU Free Trade Agreement could be concluded by the end of 2026. Further strengthening the outlook, the India-UK Free Trade Agreement is set to come into force from July 15, providing tariff benefits across key export-oriented sectors including textiles, apparel, pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, chemicals, auto components and gems & jewellery. Collectively, these developments are expected to enhance export competitiveness, strengthen trade flows and support investment activity over the medium term.

The banking sector is favourably placed, with system credit growth at a robust 17.6% (FY26), supported by broad-based demand across corporate, retail and MSME segments. Improving asset quality, healthy loan growth and a favourable earnings outlook continue to support the sector, with select private and mid-sized banks appearing particularly well placed to benefit from the ongoing credit cycle.

The Information Technology sector was under pressure following Accenture's latest results, which highlighted continued weakness in discretionary spending and a slower-than-expected recovery in client budgets. Accenture reported 3% YoY constant currency revenue growth at $18.7 billion and trimmed its FY26 guidance to 3-4% from 3-5%, implying organic growth of just 1.5-2.5%.

While demand for AI-led transformation projects remains strong, broader technology spending continues to be selective, particularly in consulting and shorter-duration projects. We expect 1QFY27 outcomes for most Indian IT large-cap companies to be similarly soft, with limited near-term triggers for a demand acceleration.

The Southwest Monsoon has remained significantly behind schedule, with the country recording a 38% rainfall deficit in June so far. With El Niño conditions expected to weigh on the seasonal outlook and rainfall projected at around 90% of the long-period average, any further delay in monsoon progression could raise concerns around kharif sowing, food inflation and rural demand.

Overall, a combination of easing geopolitical risks, softer crude oil prices and progress on key trade agreements is expected to support market sentiment and sustain the positive momentum in Indian equities, although developments around the monsoon, inflation and global policy signals will remain important monitorables.

(The writer is Head of Research, Wealth Management, MOFSL)

TOP PICKS

The data is sourced from Motilal Oswal Financial Services Limited

SBI (ID: SBIN) — BUY
Upside +25%** | Last close ₹1,043 | Target: ₹1,300*

BEL (ID: BEL) — BUY
Upside +21%** | Last close ₹429 | Target: ₹520*

RR Kabel (ID: RRKABEL) — BUY
Upside +13%** | Last close ₹2,296 | Target: ₹2,600*

TBO Tek (ID: TBOTEK) — BUY
Upside +20%** | Last close ₹1,465 | Target: ₹1,765*

Angel One (ID: ANGELONE) — BUY
Upside +13%** | Last close ₹353 | Target: ₹400*

* Target price has been calculated on the basis of fundamentals ** Upside refers to more value stock is expected to generate than its current price

PRESERVING LEGACY

Ambani vows Reliance will be 'indivisible' even after succession

BLOOMBERG

Billionaire Mukesh Ambani vowed to keep his empire undivided in the clearest comments yet that, unlike the acrimonious split with his brother in 2006, succession this time will not cleave India's most-valuable company.

The generational transfer of day-to-day management at Reliance Industries Ltd is almost complete and the conglomerate is indivisible "now and forever", Ambani, 69, told shareholders at the annual general meeting on Friday. He also announced the listing plans for the group's digital unit — the first major IPO from the family after Reliance itself went public in 1977.

Ambani's daughter Isha leads the consumer businesses, while his elder son Akash helms digital and technology operations, including the unit that's heading for a listing. His youngest Anant manages the legacy and new energy verticals. "They are three bodies, one soul," Ambani said. "Their soul is Reliance. One single indivisible Reliance, now and forever."

Avoiding future disputes is crucial for Reliance investors as well as its billionaire-owner who recently lost the crown of Asia's richest to Gautam Adani, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index. Reliance shares have slipped 16.6% this year, outpacing the losses in the benchmark S&P BSE Sensex.

Ambani's forceful assertion on Friday that history will not repeat itself also shows the hard lessons learned more than two decades back. He battled a years-long bitter feud with his younger brother, Anil, after their father and Reliance founder, Dhirubhai Ambani, died in 2002 without a will.

The fraternal fight was so intense that it forced their mother Kokilaben to intervene and hammer out a family truce, splitting the businesses. Mukesh retained the company's oil, gas, petrochemicals and textiles businesses while Anil took control of telecom, financial services and power assets.

Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani speaks virtually at the recent AGM.

Unlike Dhirubhai who never delineated work publicly between his two sons, Ambani has been more deliberate and public about his succession planning. Under him, Reliance has groomed about 500 leaders, with domain expertise and technological fluency, to support Isha, Akash and Anant in running the businesses.

Ambani has also tasked each of his children with at least one standout project to deliver on.

Akash, for instance, will be overseeing the Jio Platforms listing, which will be India's largest IPO if it manages to raise as much as $4 billion.

Besides expanding the digital unit, Akash is also helming the team that's considering launching a network of satellites in a move that can rival Elon Musk's Starlink.

Isha, on Friday, laid out a target for the closely held Reliance Consumer Product Ltd. to more than quadruple revenues by 2030 to $10.5 billion. It also plans to manufacture everything from beverages and daily essentials to televisions, smartphones, and connected wearables.

Reliance's legacy cash cow energy operations is managed by Anant, where the group is plowing billions of dollars in solar power, battery storage systems and green materials including hydrogen and ammonia.

No third-party claims on cover policies: Top court

'Financier can't claim compensation for stolen vehicle surrendered by borrower'

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Supreme Court has ruled that an insurance contract is strictly a personal agreement between the insured and the insurance company, and no third party can raise claims under it.

A bench of Justices Sandeep Mehta and Vijay Bishnoi dismissed an appeal by financier K Prakashchand, who had sought insurance compensation for a vehicle that was stolen while in his custody after the borrower surrendered it due to loan defaults.

The June 18 ruling reinforced that insurers could not be held liable to financiers or other third parties unless there was clear contractual privity or explicit assignment of rights under the policy.

The court upheld the order of the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC), which had set aside concurrent rulings by the district and state consumer forums in favour of Prakashchand.

The court observed that the financier had no privity of contract with Oriental Insurance Company Ltd, as the insurance policy was issued in the name of the vehicle owner, Somashekhar.

Though the policy carried an endorsement regarding hire-purchase/hypothecation/lease in Prakashchand's favour, the insurance company was not a party to the loan agreement, nor was a copy of the agreement furnished to it.

The bench noted that the appellant's reliance on the 1966 Sundaram Finance Ltd Vs State of Kerala judgment was misplaced, as the exact nature of the agreement — whether hire-purchase, hypothecation, or lease — was not clearly established.

Prakashchand had financed the purchase of a vehicle for Somashekhar. The vehicle was covered under a comprehensive insurance policy issued by Oriental Insurance for the period February 8, 2003, to February 7, 2004.

Due to financial difficulties and irregular repayments, Somashekhar surrendered the vehicle to the financier on December 13, 2003. Two days later, Prakashchand reported it stolen to the police.

After the police filed a final-closure report, he lodged a claim with the insurer, offering an undertaking for subrogation. The insurance company rejected the claim, leading to consumer litigation.

The District Consumer Forum at Mysuru and the Karnataka State Commission ruled in Prakashchand's favour, treating him as a pledgee with insurable interest. However, NCDRC allowed the insurer's revision petition in 2015, holding that there was no privity of contract. The apex court agreed with NCDRC that the insurance company had no notice of the specific terms of the agreement between Prakashchand and the borrower.

Saffron body points out religious ads on Mumbai trains

MUMBAI, DHNS: Alleging that Mumbai's suburban railway network was being increasingly used to promote religious-conversion campaigns and fraudulent advertisements, the Hindu Janajagruti Samiti (HJS) has urged the authorities to initiate criminal action against the alleged organisers and advertisers, warning of a public agitation if no concrete steps were taken within 15 days.

In a memorandum submitted to the Maharashtra director general of police, the Home Department, and the general manager of Central Railway, the organisation claimed local train coaches, particularly on the Panvel-CSMT route, were being used to circulate material aimed at religious conversion and to promote superstition and dubious services.

The HJS alleged that pamphlets with messages such as "Do you need a lifeline?" and "Jesus is God" were being distributed, and that certain websites mentioned in the material suggest the existence of a wider outreach network. It argued that public transport infrastructure should not be used for such activities.

The organisation also raised concerns over advertisements displayed inside coaches that allegedly made unverified claims of faith healing, including curing serious illnesses through prayer.

Drone drops, info gaps led to Pahalgam attack: NIA

SRINAGAR, PTI

Cross-border drones successfully dropped arms and ammunition as deep as Kashmir's Baramulla district without detection, according to a National Investigation Agency (NIA) chargesheet filed in last year's audacious Pahalgam terror attack case.

The NIA probe has tracked the pre-attack movements of the terrorists who struck the popular Baisaran meadows in Pahalgam in April last year. The terror attack resulted in the death of 26 people, the majority of whom were tourists.

In response to the attack, Indian armed forces launched Operation Sindoor in which terror infrastructure across the border was hit.

Security experts analysing the chargesheet point to a critical drop in human intelligence gathering between 2022 and 2024 as a primary reason the terror cell was able to move freely through the valley undetected.

The investigation highlights a worrying shift in the logistics of terror in the region. Rather than relying solely on traditional, heavily guarded infiltration routes along the Line of Control (LoC), handlers from across the border are increasingly deploying unmanned aerial vehicles.

Officials noted that these drones managed to penetrate deep into the hinterland, bypassing multi-tiered security cordons to deliver hardware and money directly to terror cells operating in north Kashmir's Baramulla district.

Gogal Dara Forest in the Baramulla district is believed to have become a hotspot for drone dropping because it is in the line of sight from across the border.

While the chargesheet has meticulously charted how the attackers embedded themselves within the local landscape before striking the tourist hub, it has also sparked a debate among security analysts regarding structural blind spots.

Internet ridicules Bihar Health Minister Nishant's yoga struggle

ABHAY KUMAR
PATNA

Bihar Health Minister Nishant Kumar, son of former chief minister Nitish Kumar, on Sunday became the subject of ridicule on social media after his video with yoga poses went viral on Sunday morning.

Videos on social media platforms showed Nishant, who was sworn in as Health Minister in the Samrat Choudhary-headed NDA government in Bihar in April, performing yoga along with the chief minister at the Patliputra Sports Complex in Kankarbagh, Patna.

However, the videos showed him struggling to do some asanas. Ridiculing his yoga poses, some users on X 'lauded' him for "inventing asanas", others said he could beat Ramdev in yoga.

Nishant Kumar

Dr Shama Mohammad of the Congress wrote on X: "Look at this drama – Bihar Health Minister Nishant Kumar cannot even perform basic yoga. He is the most unfit person to be the Health Minister, but Narendra Modi has given him the post because he is Nitish Kumar's son and yet he claims to be fighting against the dynasty..."

Soon after the yoga event, Nishant said, "I have requested the Chief minister to include yoga in the curriculum of all schools and colleges in Bihar."

JD(U) meet

The Janata Dal (United) held its National Council meeting in Patna on Sunday where the party leaders raised a unanimous demand before the JD(U) president Nitish Kumar to empower Nishant further with a party post so that the NDA's ruling ally in Bihar could be strengthened at the grassroots level.

MISCELLANY

◆ COMICS ◆

Blondie

HOW ABOUT SERVING ROAST BEEF AU JUS FOR YOUR INSOMNIACS CLUB BANQUET?
GOOD FOR ME! SCOTTIE?
Zzzz
PSST! SCOTTIE! IS ROAST BEEF AU JUS GOOD WITH YOU?
HUH? OH...SURE
I GUESS YOU HAVE TO CATCH UP ON SLEEP DURING THE DAY, HUH?
WHOOPS! NOW I'VE LOST BOTH OF THEM!

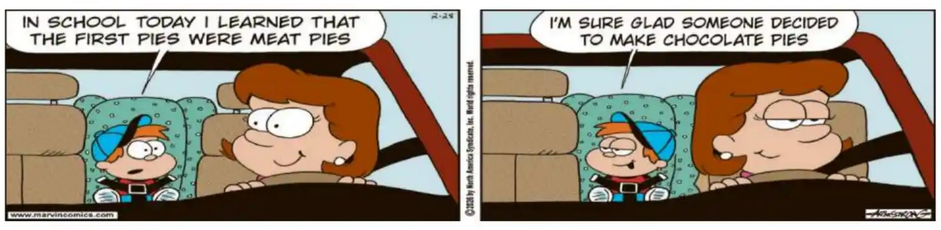
Hagar The Horrible

Beetle Bailey

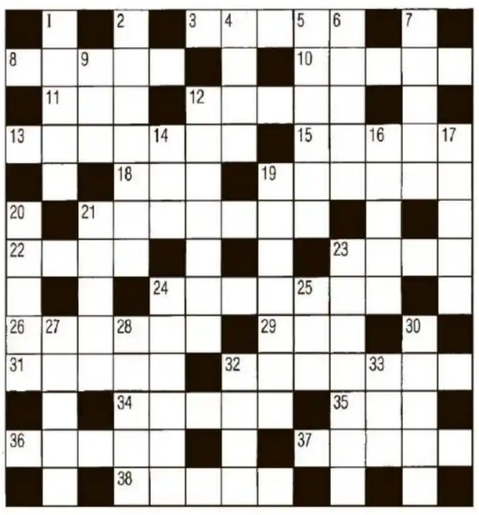
Peanuts

"TO PLAN EVIL IS AS WRONG AS DOING IT"
"IT IS AN HONOR TO RECEIVE A FRANK REPLY...OPEN REBUKE IS BETTER THAN HIDDEN LOVE"
I'M GLAD SHE LEFT..I FEEL LIKE I'M COVERED WITH APHORISMS...
MAYBE YOU NEED TO BE SPRAYED!

Marvin



CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 12443



CRYPTIC

ACROSS
3 A choice question (5)
8 Lager for the boys! (5)
10 Leave mine at the back of the house (3,2)
11 An exclusive joint? (3)
12 Pieces of land there's a reason not to be on (5)
13 Does it make you storm more wildly than the other chap? (7)
15 A warm tone (5)
18 An abbreviated moniker (3)
19 Cut out part of a rude passage (6)
21 Can they arrange resale at the trading centre? (7)
22 Inferior piece of work by the post office (4)
23 Nips back for the ride (4)
24 Undertakes to go east to the Ganges, possibly (7)
26 Gather mistakenly it's something to chew (3,3)
29 Master Charlie's little coat (3)
31 As taken to show favouritism? (5)
32 Pull back in the rear as usual (7)
34 River tours by arrangement (5)
35 Some ladies kiss sloppily (3)
36 A fun time for drunken peers (5)
37 Silk cotton always gives a good finish (5)
38 Stray carriers? (5)

DOWN
1 For a start, is it socially acceptable to be in debt? (5)
2 Not exactly a carrier plane? (7)
4 A fast runner ñ or does one hear different? (4)
5 Rushes boxes of wine round for the hotel (6)
6 Washed down a suitable dose at the hospital (5)
7 Copy a key for a girl (5)
9 An old-fashioned gangster's gun? (3)
12 Lo, an egg may be a thousand years old! (3-4)
14 Initials used as an 'alias' (3)
16 Footwear for emergency use at sea? (5)
17 Make restitution at lunchtime (5)
19 One possibly rearmed with fancy ideas (7)
20 Places notices (5)
21 Could a great ball be held under such a roof? (5)
23 Profane clause rewritten right (7)
24 Feast on an egg! (6)
25 A less than engaging witticism (3)
27 Free-living type broad in the beam? (5)
28 Replaced damaged trees (5)
30 Historically, a son upset about a kiss (5)
32 Girl from Bury? (4)
33 Bit of a race, but it gets you nowhere! (3)

ACROSS
3 Inexpensive (5)
8 Establish (3,2)
10 Based on truth (5)
11 Auction item (3)
12 Broaden (5)
13 Liked by many (7)
15 Approaches (5)
18 Torn cloth (3)
19 Sulky, morose (6)
21 Planet (7)
22 Cupid (4)
23 Just, impartial (4)
24 Exhibit (7)
26 Edible seed (6)
29 Hit lightly (3)
31 Worker in stone (5)
32 Income (7)
34 Rage (5)
35 Flipper (3)
36 Thick (5)
37 Hoodwinks (5)
38 Business (5)

DOWN
1 Fruit (5)
2 Surgical stitches (7)
4 Comb this (4)
5 Street lined with trees (6)
6 List of jurors (5)
7 Liquid measure (5)
9 Summit (3)
12 Passerine songbird (7)
14 Circuit (3)
16 Relieve, soothe (5)
17 Trap (5)
19 Photographer (7)
20 Kingdom (5)
21 Naming words (5)
23 Having important consequences (7)
24 Meal (6)
25 Loo (3)
27 Keen (5)
28 Browned bread (5)
30 Melodies (5)
32 Rip (4)
33 Pinch (3)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD 2685

ACROSS: 1 Famous, 4 Proclaim, 9 Grouse, 10 Princess, 12 Top-notch, 13 Bridge, 15 Ruin, 16 Home and dry, 19 Wet blanket, 20 Swap, 23 Reason, 25 Go-getter, 27 Actually, 28 Stroll, 29 Turnover, 30 Apathy.

DOWN: 1 Fighter, 2 Moot point, 3 Upshot, 5 Rare, 6 Confront, 7 Amend, 8 Mastery, 11 Account, 14 Develop, 17 Do without, 18 El Dorado, 19 Warrant, 21 Parsley, 22 Pent-up, 24 After, 26 Blue.

◆ SU-DO-KU-6938 ◆

7	8	4						
		2			1	3		
				2	8			4
				3		1		
6		5				9		7
		3		7				
4			9	5				
		8	3			2		
						4	6	9

hard

9	8	4	3	5	2	6	7	1
5	7	2	4	6	1	8	9	3
3	1	6	7	9	8	2	4	5
7	4	8	2	3	5	9	1	6
2	9	3	6	1	4	5	8	7
6	5	1	9	8	7	4	3	2
1	6	5	8	4	3	7	2	9
4	3	7	5	2	9	1	6	8
8	2	9	1	7	6	3	5	4

SOLUTION TO 6937

To solve the puzzle: To solve a su-do-ku puzzle, every digit from1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows, and in each of the nine boxes.

SCRABBLE™

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P3 S1 S1 O1 O1 O1 L1
E1 A1 A1 U1 T1 D2 L1
O1 I1 O1 T1 N1 M3 S1 — Double Word Score
I1 E1 C3 L1 T1 E1 S1 — 3rd Letter Triple

RACK 1
RACK 2
RACK 3
RACK 4

PAR SCORE 130-140
by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All Judd's words are in the Collins English Dictionary. JUDD'S SOLUTION TOMORROW

SATURDAY'S SOLUTION

O1 S1 P3 R1 E1 Y4 S1
N1 E1 C3 K5 I1 N1 G2
C3 O1 M3 P3 L1 E1 X8
P3 L1 U1 M3 A1 T1 E1

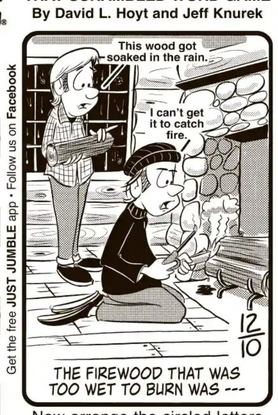
RACK 1 = 86
RACK 2 = 92
RACK 3 = 110
RACK 4 = 83
JUDD'S TOTAL 371

PAR SCORE 245-255

JUMBLE

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

LZEAG
WKETA
TMEODH
EREEGD



THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

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Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Ans. here: (Answers Tomorrow)

Saturday's Jumbles: SHAME CLUNG BICKER GENTLY
Answer: If you end up purchasing a winning lottery ticket, it will be — "BUY" CHANCE

HITORI-3392

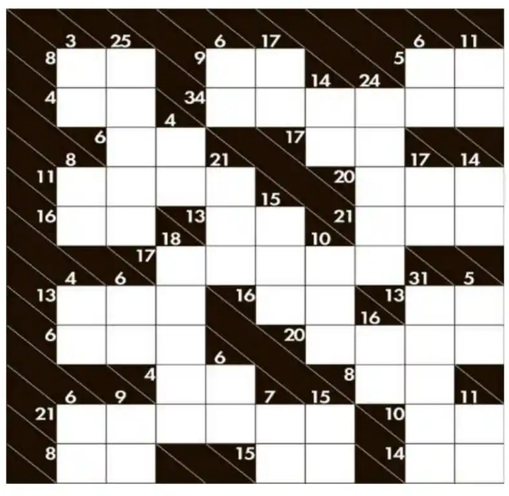
5	1	3	6	4	2	8	4
7	2	8	4	6	1	7	3
1	8	4	5	6	6	4	2
7	7	6	2	5	8	4	4
4	4	5	1	7	1	2	6
8	1	2	4	3	4	6	5
1	6	1	4	4	3	7	6
2	5	7	3	4	4	1	6

SOLUTION TO 3391

■	5	6	3	7	■	4	■
5	■	7	4	■	2	6	8
7	1	■	2	8	6	5	■
8	2	5	1	■	3	■	6
■	6	1	■	2	5	8	7
4	8	■	7	1	■	2	3
6	4	8	■	3	1	7	5
■	3	■	5	4	7	■	2

To solve the puzzle: Eliminate numbers by filling in squares so that remaining cells in that row or column do not repeat that number more than once. Filled-in cells cannot be horizontally or vertically adjacent. The un-filled cells must form a single component connected horizontally and vertically.

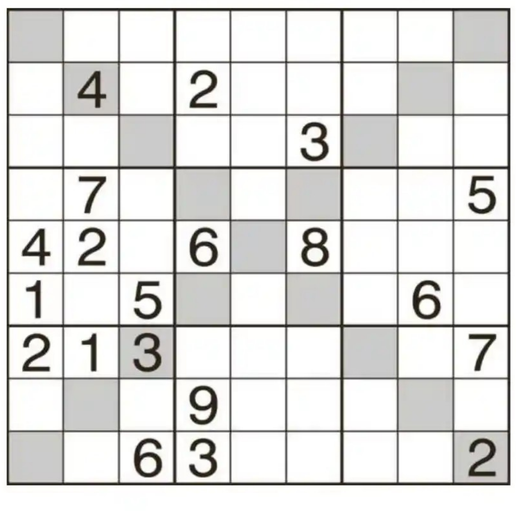
KAKURO- 3392



SOLUTION TO 3391

To solve the puzzle: Put a number from 1 through 9 in a cell. No zeros. A number in a cell separated by diagonal line tells the sum of numbers in consecutive cells at its right or downward. No number may appear more than once in consecutive cells.

SU DO KU X - 3954



SOLUTION TO 3953

6	5	7	3	2	9	8	4	1
9	8	1	6	7	4	5	2	3
2	3	4	8	1	5	6	7	9
1	6	9	2	5	8	7	3	4
5	2	8	4	3	7	1	9	6
7	4	3	9	6	1	2	8	5
8	1	5	7	4	3	9	6	2
3	7	6	1	9	2	4	5	8
4	9	2	5	8	6	3	1	7

To solve the puzzle: The objective is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column, each 3x3 box and each shaded diagonal line contains the same number only once.

Spirit of women's quota law lost in electoral representation

ADR report shows BJP had 16%, Cong 13% of women candidates in 2024 Lok Sabha polls

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The representation of women in the country's electoral politics undermines the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, the law that guarantees 33% reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies.

BJP, which has been posing as the champion of women's rights and political representation, had only 16% women candidates in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, a report by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) showed.

The Congress, too, lagged when it came to fielding women, and had only 13% female candidates in the same year. In fact, "none of the national parties met the one-third (33%) benchmark for women candidates" in the elections.

The report showed that women accounted for only around 10% (3,273 out of 31,429) in the 2024 Lok Sabha and 20 Assembly elections held after the quota law was enacted. This number could have plunged further had independents and candidates from registered unrecognised parties not entered the fray.

In contrast, several state parties recorded substantially higher levels of female representation. These included Naam Tamilar Katchi (50%), Biju Janata Dal (33%), Rashtriya Janata Dal (29%) and Trinamool Congress (25%), the ADR report said.

The report comes at a time when the government is looking at avenues for implementing the 33% quota regime for women in the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies.

Hollow promises

LOK SABHA 2024
ANALYSED CANDIDATES
Total: **8,360**
Women: **800**
- Recognised parties: 254
- Unrecognised parties: 267
- Independents: 279

20 Assembly Elections after passage of Women's Bill
CANDIDATES
Total: **31,429**
Women: **3,273**
- Recognised Parties: 1,394
- Unrecognised: 758
- Independent: 1,121

The report indicated that the recognised parties with a bigger pie in power and possibility of winning seats are reluctant to field more women.

The report pointed out that a "sad reality of Indian politics is that women often struggle to advance in political parties without the patronage of powerful male leaders".

"Therefore, bringing courageous, credible and worthy women into National and State politics could be a significant step for women's representation which inturn would result in making governance more responsive to women's interests and needs," it added.

The analysis based on the election affidavits of 8,360 Lok Sabha candidates showed that 800 or 9.56% were women. Among them, the highest chunk was independents at 279 or 34.87% of women candidates while registered unrecognised parties, which have not crossed the threshold to become recognised parties, fielded 267 women, or 33.75%.

Assembly polls

In the 20 Assembly polls after the passage of the Women's Bill, only 3,273 (10.41%) out of 31,429 candidates were women.

Among the 3,273 candidates, 1,394 or 42.59% were fielded by recognised parties while 1,121 or 34.24% were independents and 758 or 23.15% were from registered unrecognised parties.

The International Parliamentary Union had ranked India 151 among 185 countries in terms of women's representation in Parliament in March 2025. The ADR report said there is up to 50% quota for women in local bodies but it has not translated into increased representation in Parliament or assemblies.

The ADR report said the lack of representation is primarily caused by male dominated party structure and lack of inner-party democracy, among several other factors.

2 dead in luxury car crash on Maha highway

THANE, PTI: Two persons were killed, and another sustained serious injuries after their speeding BMW crashed into a road divider and overturned multiple times in Maharashtra's Thane district in the early hours of Sunday, police said.

The accident took place around 4 am on a stretch of the Mumbai-Vadodara highway near Badlapur when the luxury car was returning from Titwala, an official said.

The deceased, Yogesh Dighe (26) and Rikeba Jacob (24), were residents of Badlapur. Another occupant, identified as Anand, suffered serious injuries and is undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Thane, he said.

According to a preliminary probe, the car, allegedly being driven at high speed, hit the road divider, causing the driver to lose control, and overturned multiple times before coming to a halt, police said.

The impact of the crash left the car in a mangled state.

Bangladeshi among 9 held for smuggling golden langurs

GUWAHATI, DHNS: In what is being perceived as a major success against a suspected international racket of wildlife smugglers, the Assam Police and Forest Department personnel have arrested nine persons, including a Bangladeshi, while they were allegedly smuggling golden langurs.

The nine were arrested at the Kashikora village in the Chirang district under Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) in western Assam with eight golden langurs, a primate species endemic to western Assam districts and neighbouring Bhutan. One of the langurs was found dead.

Five of the accused — Latibul Sheikh, Alam Gir Mulla, Abdul Khalek, Fakir Chand and Inzamamul Hoque — are from West Bengal, an official said. Three — Jackson Biswakarma, Ranjit Narzary and Pinkush Narzary — hail from Assam's BTR. The Bangladeshi was identified as Mohamad Jamal.

PM leads yoga event in Kolkata after venue denied for namaz

Closure of Red Road for Modi's visit and celebrations triggers political row

KOLKATA, DHNS

A cut-out of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is seen near police barricades on roads leading to Red Road during the International Day of Yoga celebrations, in Kolkata. PTI

Invoking Rabindranath Tagore's belief that human identity is shaped through connectedness with the world rather than isolation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi led International Day of Yoga celebrations on Kolkata's Red Road on Sunday, weeks after the BJP government in West Bengal denied permission for the customary Eid-ul-Adha congregation at the same venue.

"When yoga becomes part of our nature, it becomes the foundation of human unity," Modi said as he led the nation in observing the 12th International Day of Yoga from Kolkata, over a month after the BJP came to power in the state.

Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari subtly hit out at the previous Trinamool Congress regime, alleging that the Mamata Banerjee government had stayed away from yoga day celebrations.

The Red Road — officially known as Indira Gandhi Sarani — remained closed to traffic for several days as the state government prepared for the prime minister's visit, triggering a political controversy.

The Red Road, built in 1820, has traditionally been the venue of some of the largest public religious and cultural events in Kolkata, including the Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adha congregations as well as the carnival showcasing idols during the Durga Puja festival.

But the new BJP government decided not to allow namaz on roads, arguing that such congregations caused hassles for commuters.

BJP leader Arjun Singh told journalists on May 12 that the new government would not allow prayers on roads and that namaz should be offered in mosques. The state government had then denied permission for namaz to be held on Red Road on the occasion of Eid-ul-Adha on May 28.

BJP veteran and minister Dilip Ghosh said those unwilling to accept the government's policy should go to Bangladesh or Pakistan to offer namaz. His remark triggered protests from Naushad Siddiqui, leader of the Indian Secular Front and a legislator, as well as several CPM leaders, who argued that the state government was targeting a particular community while subjecting commuters to days of disruption.

The controversy also reached the Calcutta HC, which on June 18 directed the Bengal government to ensure suitable alternative traffic arrangements for commuters affected by the road closure.

Maha Oppn boycotts tea with CM over farm distress, drought

MRITYUNJAY BOSE
MUMBAI, DHNS

With Maharashtra staring at delayed monsoon rains, a looming water crisis and growing distress in the farm sector, the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) on Sunday boycotted the customary tea meeting hosted by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on the eve of the monsoon session of the state legislature and accused the BJP-led Maha Yuti government of being insensitive to pressing public issues.

Senior leaders of the Congress, the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT), and the Sharad Pawar-led NCP (SP) alleged that the government had consistently failed to address issues ranging from drought and rural distress to law and order, crimes against women, and the spread of narcotics.

"The state is facing a severe water crisis. Sowing operations have been delayed, and farmers are under tremendous stress. The government should immediately declare a drought-like situation and provide meaningful relief," said Shiv Sena (UBT) leader and former minister Bhaskar Jadhav.

The Opposition also demanded a comprehensive farm-loan waiver, arguing that the government's recently announced package was riddled with conditions and exclusions. "The government should make farmers' 7/12 extracts debt-free instead of trapping them in technicalities," said the MVA leaders.

Congress MLC and the party's group leader in the Legislative Council, Satej Patil, accused the ruling Maha Yuti of running a "56%-commission government".

"Contractors are complaining that commissions have become institutionalised. Bills worth more than Rs 1 lakh crore are pending. Funding for the Jal Jeevan Mission has been reduced, and development works have stalled," Patil alleged.

NCP (SP) leader Jayant Patil, who was the state's home minister, claimed its law-and-order has deteriorated, citing rising crimes against women and drug-related offences.

1 more Shigella death, 7 fresh cases in Kerala

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PTI: Kerala reported one more Shigella-related death and seven fresh cases on Sunday, taking the number of fatalities linked to the infection in the state this month to six, officials said.

According to a statement issued by the office of Health Minister K Muraleedharan, health authorities confirmed that a 54-year-old woman from Mavoor in Kozhikode district, who died on June 20, had been infected with Shigella.

With the latest additions, the state has reported 140 Shigella cases and six deaths during June, while the total number of confirmed cases this year has risen to 216.

SPORT

D'Artagnan wins Colts Stakes

BENGALURU RESULTS

Pesi Shroff-trained D'Artagnan, ridden by Vivek G, won the Zavaray S Poonawalla Colts Championship Stakes Grade-I, the feature event of the races on Sunday.

1. The Guindy Plate (Div II) - 1200M: Amazing Storm (Saleem Shah) Bhawani Singh) 1, Anzac Parade (Aditya Waydande) 2, Dr Colchester (JH Arul) 3, N R I Millennium (Ashhad Asbar) 4. WB: 1-3/4, 1-3/4, Nk. T: 1:15.54. Tote: Rs 155 (w) 34, 12, 25 p; Shp: Rs 30; Thp: Rs 81; Fc: Rs 474; Q: Rs 167; Tri: Rs 12566 & 5385; Exp: Rs 48,608 & 20832. TB: MR Singh. Fav: Anzac Parade.

2. The Bergamot Plate (Div II) - 1100M: Magestic Persona (RM Ramaswamy and M Venkatarama) Vishal 1, Aphelion (A Sandesh) 2, Super Kind (Salman Khan) 3, Cr Seven (Kiran Rai) 4. WB: 8-1/4, 3, 3-1/2. T: 1:06.61. Tote: Rs 25 (w) 13, 10, 17 p; Shp: Rs 23; Thp: Rs 41; Fc: Rs 36; Q: Rs 16; Tri: Rs 180 & 132; Exp: Rs 341 & 101. TB: V Lokanath. Fav: Aphelion.

3. The International Day Of Yoga Plate - 1200M: Rizz (Diamond Band Racing Syn and Rapar's Galloping, Jehan J S and Syed Ainuddin Arif) 1, Osaka (Suraj Narredu) 2, Flavianus (Neeraj Rawal) 3, Astrid (Arvind Kumar) 4. WB: 5-1/2, 3/4, 1. T: 1:14.18. Tote: Rs 44 (w) 14, 20, 23 p; Shp: Rs 26; Thp: Rs 53; Fc: Rs 151; Q: Rs 39; Tri: Rs 568 & 419; Exp: Rs 3621 & 1775. TB: A Jodha. Fav: Osaka.

4. The Noble Prince Plate - 1800M: Dardanus (Joydeep Datta Gupta) Antony Raj 1, Stentorian (RN Darshan) 2, Mandate (Aleemuddin) 3, Oxytocin (Kiran Rai) 4. WB: 1-1/4, 1/2, 2-1/4. T: 1:52.94. Tote: Rs 26 (w) 10, 41, 14 p; Shp: Rs 177; Thp: Rs 35; Fc: Rs 645; Q: Rs 658; Tri: Rs 3099 & 1123; Exp: Rs C/F. TB: Bharath Singh. Fav: Dardanus.

5. The Civil Service Cup - 2000M: Prokofiev (Poonawalla Racing Breeding Family, Rishad N Pandole) Akshay Kumar's 1, Caccini (Vivek G) 2, Ice Of Fire (Ashhad Asbar) 3, Star Studded (Yash Narredu) 4. WB: 2-1/2, 10, 1-1/4. T: 2:05.94. Tote: Rs 30 (w) 22, 13 p; Shp: Rs 25; Thp: Rs 24; Fc: Rs 54; Q: Rs 24; Tri: Rs 60 & 31; Exp: Rs 150 & 105. TB: P Prasanna Kumar. Fav: Caccini.

6. The Zavaray S Poonawalla Colts Championship Stakes (Grade-I) - 1600M: D'Artagnan (Horse Haven Breeding rep, Mr & Mrs Vijay Shirke Farouq Rattonsey, Sameer Rattonsey Zaheer F Rattonsey, M H Deboo, Liane Milan Luthria, Milan Luthria, Darashaw Racing and Darashaw Keki Mehta) Vivek G 1, Stud Poker (Antony Raj) 2, Knotty Emperor (Suraj Narredu) 3, Zayyan (Yash Narredu) 4. WB: 1-1/4, 4, 5. T: 1:36.37. Tote: Rs 16 (w) 10, 11, 13 p; Shp: Rs 23; Thp: Rs 31; Fc: Rs 37; Q: Rs 14; Tri: Rs 76 & 31; Exp: Rs 162 & 84. TB: P Shroff. Fav: D' Artagnan.

7. The Bergamo Plate (Div I) - 1100M: Steffen (P Arun Kumar) Vishal Shivhare 1, Hushed (Vishal) 2, Supreme Success (Yash Narredu) 3, Zayana (Pavan) 4. WB: 2, 1-3/4, 7. T: 1:07.18. Tote: Rs 60 (w) 28, 10, 18 p; Shp: Rs 32; Thp: Rs 38; Fc: Rs 173; Q: Rs 51; Tri: Rs 197 & 243; Exp: Rs 1273 & 481. TB: S John. Fav: Hushed.

8. The Guindy Plate (Div I) - 1200M: My Solitaire (Ramesh R) Antony Raj 1, Legendary Impact (Vishal) 2, Estefania (Shreyas Singh) 3, Lg's Script (R Vaibhav) 4. WB: 1/2, 1-3/4, 3/4. T: 1:14.60. Tote: Rs 30 (w) 17, 21, 17 p; Shp: Rs 41; Thp: Rs 68; Fc: Rs 120; Q: Rs 55; Tri: Rs 433 & 166; Exp: Rs 2456 & 1052. TB: S Shoban Babu. Fav: My Solitaire.

Jackpot: Rs 4616 & 408. **Mini Jackpot:** Rs 1674. **I treble:** Rs 822. **II treble:** Rs 456.

HOCKEY

India back in Pro League

Navneet & Sunelita score in 2-0 victory over New Zealand in Nations Cup final

AUCKLAND, PTI

Sunelita Toppo (right) celebrates after scoring India's second goal during their 2-0 win over New Zealand in the final of the Nations Cup in Auckland on Sunday. HI MEDIA

Continuing their impressive run of form, India defeated hosts New Zealand 2-0 in the final to win their second FIH Women's Nations Cup title and secured promotion to the FIH Women's Pro League here on Sunday.

Navneet Kaur (4th) gave India the early lead before Sunelita Toppo (15th) doubled India's advantage. The team produced a stellar defensive display to protect their lead and win the title, which also marked their return to the Pro League next season.

Lalremsiami won the 'Player of the Match' award in the final, while Deepika finished as the joint-top scorer in the tournament with six goals to her name – sharing the honours with USA's Ashley Sessa.

This is India's second Nations Cup title, having won the inaugural edition of the tournament in 2022.

India remained unbeaten throughout their campaign, defeating USA (3-2), Japan (2-1), and Uruguay (3-2) in the Pool A matches, before registering a commanding 6-0 win over Chile in the semifinal.

To recognise the teams' achievements, Hockey India announced a cash award of Rs 3 lakh for each player and Rs 1.5 lakh for each member of the support staff.

In the title match, the hosts enjoyed the majority of possession in the early exchanges as they looked to make early inroads. However, the visitors manufactured the first meaningful opportunity of the game when Kaur won a penalty corner. She converted from the set-piece with a thunderous hit in the 4th minute.

India men edge Netherlands

Indian men's hockey team won 3-2 against the Netherlands in their last match of the FIH Pro League Rotterdam leg on Sunday, reports PTI.

Jugraj Singh (18th), Abhishek (27th), & Rajinder (56th) found the net.

Karnataka swimmers crowned champions again

Swimming giants tally 334 points to top the table

BENGALURU, DHNS

Karnataka swimmers celebrate after emerging overall champions in the 79th Senior National Aquatic Championships in Ahmedabad on Sunday.

Powerhouse Karnataka, expectedly, clinched the overall championship as well the team championship titles in the men's and women's sections on the concluding day of the 79th Senior National Aquatic Championships in Ahmedabad on Sunday.

Karnataka, who have rarely loosened their grip on the overall championship, tallied 334 points to top the table. In the men's section they scored 164 points while their women counterparts finished with 170.

In all, Karnataka won 19 gold, 16 silver and 12 bronze, way ahead of second-placed and rivals Maharashtra (7 gold, 4 silver and 6 bronze).

The only disappointment was missing out on individual honours with Gujarat's Aryan Nehra wearing the men's crown after bagging three gold and one bronze. The youngster set two new meet records, including an Indian best performance.

Maharashtra's Saanvi Deshwal, with three gold and a silver, was adjudged the best swimmer in the women's section. Saanvi set one meet record which was also an Indian best performance.

Results: Men: 200m backstroke: Rishabh Anupam Das (Mah) 1:59.90 (NMR; Old: 2:00.65, Rishabh Anupam Das, 2025) 1; Utkarsh Santosh Patil (SSCB) 2:01.82, 2; Akash Mani (Kar) 2:05.18, 3.

50m breaststroke: Danush Suresh (TN) 28.38s, 1; Likith Selvaraj Prema (SSCB) 28.69, 2; Vidith S Shankar (Kar) 28.80, 3.

200m butterfly: Bikram Changmai (RSPB) 2:02.50, 1; Dharshan S (Kar) 2:03.00, 2; Laitonjam Lanchenba (Man) 2:04.43, 3.

400m freestyle: Aryan Nehra (Guj) 3:55.34, 1; Aneesh S Gowda (Kar) 3:57.41, 2; Dhakshan S (Kar) 3:57.70, 3.

Women: 50m butterfly: Nina Venkatesh (Kar) 27.67s (NMR; Old: 27.74, Nina Venkatesh, 2023) 1; Tanishi Gupta (Kar) 27.69, 2; Snigdha Ghosh (WB) 28.34, 3.

800m freestyle: Vritti Agarwal (Tlg) 9:05.47 (NMR; Old: 9:06.31, Richa Mishra, 2011) 1; Bhavya Sachdeva (Del) 9:10.51, 2; Sri Charani Tumu (Kar) 9:17.13, 3.

4x100m medley: Karnataka (4:18.72) (NMR; Old: 4:18.72, Maharashtra, 2023) 1; Odisha (4:22.31) 2; RSPB (4:25.20) 3.

Individual awards: Best swimmer: Men: Aryan Nehra (Guj); **Women:** Saanvi Deshwal (Mah).

Team championship: Men: Karnataka (164 points); **Women:** Karnataka (170).

Overall: Karnataka (334).

Abhay-Velavan clinch third successive Asian doubles title

BENGALURU, DHNS: India's top-seeded pair of Abhay Singh and Velavan Senthilkumar extended their dominance on the continental stage by winning a third consecutive men's doubles title at the Asian Doubles Squash Championships in Sarawak, Malaysia, on Sunday.

India also secured medals in the other two categories through Joshna Chinappa. The second-seeded women's pair of Joshna and Rathika Seelan claimed bronze after reaching the semifinals while Joshna and Velavan earned another bronze in the mixed doubles. Abhay and Velavan rallied from a game down to defeat Pakistan's Nasir Iqbal and Noor Zaman 7-11, 11-7, 11-2 in 47 minutes.

Clark stays on track, Scheffler close behind

SOUTHAMPTON (USA), AFP

American Wyndham Clark seized a six-stroke lead after Saturday's third round of the US Open while top-ranked Scottie Scheffler charged into contention for a historic triumph.

Clark, the 2023 US Open champion, sank a four-foot eagle putt at the par-five 16th on the way to firing a level-par 70 at windy Shinnecock to stand on seven-under 203 after 54 holes.

Despite a three-putt bogey at 18, Clark boosted his lead by two strokes from his 36-hole margin.

The only golfer to lose a major with a lead of six or more entering the final round was Greg Norman at the 1996 Masters.

Scheffler, who would complete a career Grand Slam with a victory Sunday on his 30th birthday, fired a 69 -- one of just two sub-par rounds on the day -- to claim a share of second on one-under 209.

Scheffler opened with two bogeys for only the fourth time in 105 major rounds, but birdied four of his first seven holes on the back nine before a bogey at the par-three 17th and a closing par.

Not since Lee Janzen in 1998 has a US Open winner been more than four strokes off the lead after 54 holes.

Joining Scheffler on 209 were fellow Americans Sam Stevens and Sahith Theegala, whose tap-in at 18 was his lone birdie of the day, plus South Korean Tom Kim, who shot 72 after bogeys on three of his first six holes.

Whipping winds added to Shinnecock's challenge, combining with dense rough and tricky pin positions to test the world's top golfers.

Wyndham Clark. AFP

TEAMS: 48 VENUES: 16 TOURNAMENT SPAN: 39 DAYS

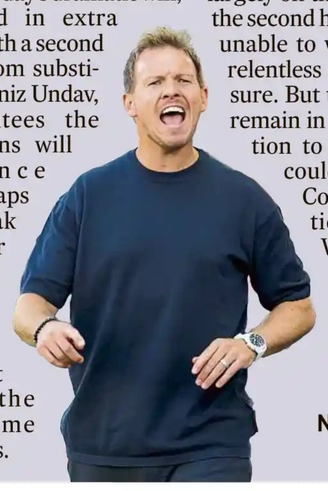
Nagelsmann eyes bigger prize

TORONTO, AFP: Coach Julian Nagelsmann was thrilled by Germany's comeback victory against Ivory Coast on Saturday but stopped short of celebrating his side advancing to the World Cup knockout stage for the first time since 2014.

"We have high ambitions," Nagelsmann said when asked if booking a place in the next round was something to celebrate. "The most important topic for us is to focus on the next step."

Germany failed to get out of the group stage both at Russia 2018 and four years ago in Qatar.

Saturday's dramatic win, secured in extra time with a second goal from substitute Deniz Undav, guarantees the Germans will advance and snaps a streak of bitter World Cup disappointment for the four-time winners.



"This is exactly what we hoped for and I'm very happy for my team," Nagelsmann said. He said that after his two-goal performance, Undav could make the starting 11 in Germany's third group stage match against Ecuador, but also stressed that the Stuttgart forward was thriving as a substitute.

"I could have him in the starting lineup," Nagelsmann said. "I think that every player would love to be in the starting lineup, but I think he's very happy as it is right now."

Franck Kessie put Ivory Coast ahead in the first half but the African side was largely on the defensive in the second half, ultimately unable to withstand the relentless German pressure. But the Elephants remain in a strong position to advance and could book Ivory Coast's first ever ticket to the World Cup knockout with a decisive win over Curacao next week.

Julian Nagelsmann

Super sub Undav triggers German eruption in Toronto

Die Mannschaft strike at the death to break Ivorian hearts and punch knockout ticket

TORONTO, REUTERS

Deniz Undav scored two goals off the bench as Germany pulled off a thrilling comeback to beat Ivory Coast 2-1 in their World Cup Group E match on Saturday, securing their place in the knockout stage for the first time since they won the title in 2014.

After having two goals disallowed in the first half, Germany did not lose focus and used intricate passing to find their way while the West Africans produced their dynamic brand of attacking football in a wild encounter at Toronto Stadium.

Germany	CIV
2	1

"This is a really important victory," said versatile striker Undav, who now has nine goals in his last eight matches. "We showed great character today."

Undav levelled the score with a controlled, volleyed finish in the 68th minute and struck again in stoppage time when he received a pass on the turn, before swivelling and firing home a ball that Yahia Fofana had no chance at stopping.

Simon Adingra had a late chance for Ivory Coast but he failed to get a shot off in the area before Germany charged back down the field where Fofana blocked a low shot from Nathaniel Brown.

The loss denied, at least for now, Ivory Coast the chance of securing their first trip to the knockout stages.

"We wanted to make history today," said Ivory Coast winger Amad Diallo. "But I think everything was a little tight."

Ivory Coast had opened the scoring in the first half when Franck Kessie slotted home a rebound off a shot by Amad on a play created when Yan Diomande charged down the left side and sent in a cross.

With more than 100,000 people of German ancestry living in Toronto, Julian Nagelsmann's men enjoyed plenty of support but were a frustrated group at the interval with nothing to show for their eight attempts on goal.

It was definitely unfamiliar territory for Germany as it marked only the fourth time they have faced a half-time deficit in their last 36 contests at the global showpiece.

But after the break a more active German side showed up, one that took more risks and were determined to dedicate everything in their effort to win.

"In the end, we deservedly won it," Nagelsmann told reporters. "The boys invested a lot. I'm very happy for the whole team."

Germany looked to have opened the scoring when midfielder Aleksandar Pavlovic rose to meet a short corner in the 25th minute but was deemed to have fouled Fofana in the process. The ruling left Pavlovic with his hands atop his head in disbelief while Fofana received some attention after the collision and the partisan German crowd made their disdain for the referee's decision known.

Germany's Deniz Undav (right) scores the equaliser against Ivory Coast in a Group E match at the Toronto Stadium on Saturday night. AFP

Shortly after it was Ivory Coast who finally broke through with Kessie's goal. The West Africans have scored in their last seven matches at the tournament – the longest such sequence on the global stage in their history.

Deniz Undav

Germany once again put the ball in the back of the net but their celebrations were cut short as the referee determined that Jamal Musiala had fouled Odilon Kossounou in the build-up.

"We had exactly what it takes to succeed in a tournament, a winning mentality, team spirit," said German defender Jonathan Tah. "We didn't give up; we just kept going.

Germany top Group E with six points and are through to the last 32 while Ivory Coast remain on three after two matches. Germany will close out the group stage against Ecuador on Thursday in New Jersey.

Room service: Eloy heroics keep Curacao alive

KANSAS CITY, REUTERS

Curacao goalkeeper Eloy Room needed two minutes to make one of the World Cup's most impressive saves so far, stopping Ecuador forward Enner Valencia from close range and setting the tone for a career-defining performance that created history on Saturday.

Room made 15 saves in the 0-0 draw with Ecuador in Group E, the most in a 90-minute match in the tournament's history, hauling the smallest nation ever to play at a World Cup - with a population of about 156,000 - to their first point.

Curacao joined fellow tournament debutants Cape Verde in finding unexpected heroes in goal after the African nation's Vozinha helped hold heavyweights Spain to a 0-0 draw in their opening round match in Group H.

The 37-year-old Room, the oldest player in Curacao's squad, withstood relentless Ecuadorean pressure, saving shots that included an 18-metre effort from John Yeboah in the 41st minute and a second-half header from Valencia.

Curacao	Ecuador
0	0

Only the United States' Tim Howard has produced more stops in a single World Cup match, with 16 in an extra-time defeat by Belgium in the last 16 at the finals in 2014.

"I was not thinking about that during the game," Room told reporters, though joking that he was annoyed he was not able to reach Howard's mark. He described the draw as a team effort.

Ecuador goalkeeper Hernan Galindez said Room had the game of his life against the South American side.

In 2019, Room made more than a dozen saves in his country's first Gold Cup win against Honduras. Shining on the biggest stage, however, marked an additional landmark for the nation of about 156,000 people - and a personal accomplishment.

Netherlands-born Room told FIFA in an interview earlier this year that the reason he decided to play for Curacao was dreaming as a little kid to make it to the World Cup with the country.

He became eligible to represent Curacao through his father, and said he used to visit the country on vacation in his youth. Patrick Kluivert contacted him to join the team in 2015, when the former Netherlands international managed the side.

Social media also reflected the impact of his performance, with Room's Instagram account jumping to around 700,000 followers from fewer than 100,000 before the game - a boom similar to what happened to Cape Verde's Vozinha.

Born near the German border, the six-feet-three Room plays for Miami FC in the USL Championship, but spent most of his career at Dutch club Vitesse. He has also played for Columbus Crew in the MLS and PSV Eindhoven in the Eredivisie.

Curacao is an autonomous constituent country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the game attracted royalty.

With the Netherlands' King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima in attendance at the match, Room himself became royalty for Curacao.

Curacao goalkeeper Eloy Room makes a stunning save off Ecuador's Jurien Gaari (right) during their Group E clash in Kansas City Stadium on Saturday. REUTERS

'I think I need a statue in Curacao'

KANSAS CITY, AFP

Curacao goalkeeper Eloy Room joked that he deserves a statue on the Caribbean island after a jaw-dropping display that earned the team their first-ever World Cup point.

The 37-year-old shot-stopper made 15 saves in the Group E match against Ecuador on Saturday to keep alive Curacao's hopes of progressing to the knockout stages.

His tally is the most on record -- since 1966 -- by any goalkeeper in a World Cup match that did not feature extra-time. "It means everything," said Room. "It feels like a victory, you know, for us. But now it means a lot. It's the first point in the World Cup for us.

"So it's unreal if you know the journey where we come from and we're now here. And today we showed we have real heart with the team. So it's an unbelievable feeling."

The Miami FC goalkeeper joked that he was disappointed to miss out on former US goalkeeper Tim Howard's record of 16 saves noted by FIFA in a match against Belgium at the 2014 World Cup in Brazil that went to extra-time.

"I think he was sweating at home, you know, looking at the game," he said. "But I heard it was also another record from really long ago. So yeah, I'm proud of that."

Room praised his team-mates but cheekily suggested his achievement should be set in stone.

"I'm really proud of the team also, because again, we did it with the team," he said.

Eloy Room

Dominant Dutch hit Swede spot

LOS ANGELES, AFP

Cody Gakpo and Brian Brobbey both scored twice as the rampant Netherlands thrashed Sweden 5-1 in a World Cup warning on Saturday in Houston.

The big win in front of nearly 69,000 put the delighted Dutch on the cusp of the knockout rounds and gave them liftoff after being held by Japan.

Ronald Koeman's side top Group F with four points from two games, staying ahead of Japan on goal difference, followed by Sweden on three while Tunisia are at the bottom with no points.

Despite the sobering loss the Swedes had plenty of chances but were denied by good goalkeeping and wasteful finishing.

They are still in with a good chance of progressing into the last 32 but face a test in the form of Japan in their final group game.

Sunderland striker Brobbey got his first start of the tournament and repaid Koeman with predatory goals after five and 17 minutes.

Before that, the 24-year-old forward had scored only once for his country.

In a game full of Premier League talent, Liverpool's Gakpo -- who set Brobbey up for the opener -- scored twice early in the second half.

Substitute Anthony Elanga pulled one back for Sweden just before the hour with a classy finish.

Substitute Crysencio Summerville, who was replaced in the starting lineup by Brobbey, had the last word for the five-star Dutch.

Two crew members from the historic Artemis II lunar mission were among the VIP guests, a nod to Houston's place as the home of space flight.

Netherlands' Brian Brobbey celebrates after scoring against Sweden during their Group F game at Houston Stadium on Saturday. AFP

The Dutch, twice pegged back in a lively 2-2 draw with Japan to start their title bid, made the brighter start in front of their orange-clad fans and King Willem-Alexander.

NED	SWE
5	1

Brobbey, who came in for Summerville despite the winger scoring against Japan, started and finished the first goal. It was made in the Premier League, with goalkeeper Bart Verbruggen, midfielder Tijjani Reijnders and Gakpo all involved.

Brobbey exchanged passes with Gakpo, before the Anfield attacker crossed in low from the left for his team-mate to stab in from close range.

At the other end the much-vaunted attack of Liverpool's Alexander Isak and Viktor Gyokeres of Arsenal were feeding on scraps for Sweden.

Twelve minutes after his opener Brobbey made it 2-0 when a deflected Denzel Dumfries cross from the right fell perfectly into his path and he toe-poked past Kristoffer Nordfeldt.

Sweden, who thrashed Tunisia 5-1 in their first game, then created several opportunities for Gyokeres and Yasin Ayari to reduce the deficit but they failed to find a way past Verbruggen before half-time.

Koeman sent on Summerville for Malen at the break, and two minutes later it was mission impossible for Sweden, Gakpo prodding in from close range after yet another dangerous low cross from Dumfries. Gakpo scored a lovely fourth on 54 minutes, turning inside his defender before firing low into the bottom corner. Elanga pulled one back when he raced clear of the Dutch defence and rattled the ball past Verbruggen.

West Ham's Summerville made it five in the dying minutes with his second goal in North America.

Japan slay Tunisia in landmark game

MONTERREY (MEXICO), AP

Japan moved one step closer to reaching the knockout stages of the World Cup for the fourth consecutive time after pummeling Tunisia 4-0 in Group F, securing a milestone victory in the tournament's 1,000th men's match.

Japan's four goals were the most the Samurai Blue have ever scored in a World Cup game, as it comfortably dismantled a Tunisia side that became the first to ever fire its coach after the opening match.

Japan	Tunisia
4	0

Ayase Ueda scored twice, along with Daichi Kamada and Junya Ito to put Japan level with the Netherlands on four points. The Dutch are currently on top of the group due to having scored one more goal than Japan across its two matches.

Even after leading 2-0 just over half an hour into the match, Japan continued to apply pressure to a disjointed Tunisian defence.

"If we are able to get as many goals as possible, that would give the team confidence," said Hajime Moriyasu, the first head coach to lead Japan at consecutive World Cups. "That is something we would definitely want to repeat against Sweden."

The loss for Tunisia means it is eliminated from the tournament. Japan is guaranteed at least third in the group, which could be enough to advance to the knockout stages.

Ayase Ueda scored twice during Japan's 4-0 drubbing of Tunisia at the Monterrey Stadium in Guadalupe, Mexico, on Saturday. AFP

Tunisia appointed two-time Africa Cup of Nations winner Herve Renard to try and rescue the Eagles of Carthage after its humiliating 5-1 loss to Sweden, but the North African nation could not contain Japan's speedy attack nor create any clear chances of their own.

"It is important to get ready to fight for this third game against the Netherlands," Renard said. "It's never easy after two losses in two games, but we must take our responsibilities and be professionals to the very end."

Kamada opened the scoring in the fourth minute, the fastest in Japan's World Cup history. The Crystal Palace midfielder, who acted as a "shadow striker", was perfectly positioned for Keito Nakamura's cross and barely had to move to tap in his second goal of the tournament.

TEAMS: 48 VENUES: 16 TOURNAMENT SPAN: 39 DAYS

Yamal sparks Spain fury as they serve it red hot

European champions slay hapless Saudi Arabia 4-0

ATLANTA, AFP

Lamine Yamal's return sparked Spain's World Cup into life as the European champions ran riot to beat Saudi Arabia 4-0 in Atlanta.

Making his first start in two months after a hamstring injury, Yamal ended La Roja's long wait for a World Cup goal just 10 minutes in.

Mikel Oyarzabal then struck twice to put Luis de la Fuente's men 3-0 up inside 24 minutes.

Spain	KSA
4	0

De la Fuente's careful management of Yamal's minutes continued as the Barcelona superstar was replaced at half-time before Hassan al-Tambakti's own goal rounded off the scoring.

Victory propels Spain to the top of Group H ahead of Uruguay's meeting with Cape Verde later on Sunday.

Billed as one of the pre-tournament favourites, Spain got off to a slow start in a 0-0 draw against debutants Cape Verde.

A pedestrian performance despite dominating possession only highlighted the importance of Yamal to their quest to be world champions for a second time.

De la Fuente also warned his players had been "stung" by the criticism they faced following their opening result and they responded emphatically.

Yamal's return was one of four changes in total with Pedro Porro, Dani Olmo and Alex Baena also coming into the starting line-up.

After over 2,500 passes and 50 attempts at goal since their last World Cup goal, Spain finally found the net and fittingly Yamal made the breakthrough.

Oyarzabal found space in behind the Saudi defence and his low cross picked out the 18-year-old to slot in at the back post.

The Saudis held Uruguay 1-1 in their opening game but there was little evidence that the billions splashed to raise the level of their domestic league has aided the national team.

Coach Georgios Donis looked particularly irked that two of Spain's goals came from corners.

Oyarzabal pounced on Aymeric Laporte's flick on to give the 2010 winners the breathing space they craved. Just three minutes later, the Real Sociedad forward volleyed home from Dani Olmo's header for his 14th international goal in his last 13 caps.

Spain's Lamine Yamal (right) taps home the opening goal during their 4-0 humbling of Saudi Arabia at Atlanta Stadium on Sunday. AFP

Oyarzabal was inches away from a first-half hat-trick when his audacious effort with the outside of his foot from a narrow angle came back off the crossbar.

But with the job done by half-time, De la Fuente could afford the luxury of replacing Yamal and Oyarzabal at the break.

The changes did not disrupt the waves of Spanish attack towards the Saudi goal, but the fourth also came via a corner.

Cucurella was afforded acres of space to shoot and although his effort was repelled by Mohammed al-Owais, the rebound deflected in off the unfortunate Tambakti.

To round off an ideal afternoon for De la Fuente on his 65th birthday, Nico Williams and Mikel Merino were afforded valuable minutes off the bench in the second period as they too get up to match speed after lengthy absences due to injury. By contrast, the pressure is now on Donis to deliver in Saudi Arabia's final group game against Cape Verde in Houston. Victory will likely take the Arabian Falcons into the knockout stages for the first time since the World Cup was last in the United States 32 years ago.

FIFA WORLD CUP

Painting the pitch pink, several boots at a time

Of all the colors of the rainbow at the World Cup taking place in the US, Canada and Mexico, pink is the star on soccer's biggest stage, reports AFP from New York.

Dozens of players are wearing pink boots that stand out against the green grass of the pitch after multiple shoe companies produced them ahead of this tournament with an eye on performance as well as visibility. This time, Nike, Adidas, Puma, Skechers and New Balance all came out with pink boots.

US-Aus tie draws nearly 15M viewers

The United States men's national team turned a Friday afternoon match into must-see TV with an overnight rating of 14.78 million viewers, according to Nielsen, reports Reuters.

The USMNT's 2-0 victory over Australia was the fourth largest watched match in the men's World Cup on English-language television.

The viewership for Friday's game trailed last week's USMNT opener against Paraguay, which attracted 18.04 million viewers.

Green activists see red at Infantino

FIFA president Gianni Infantino has been a busy man at this World Cup but his unquenchable thirst to pack in as many matches as possible is causing unrest among environmentalists who are questioning his indifference to climate change, reports AFP from Lausanne.

Mexico City, Guadalajara, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Vancouver, Seattle, Kansas City, Houston: the Italo-Swiss boss has already powered up his private jet to appear in the stands 10 times in seven days.

Egypt coach Hassan denies rift with star striker Mo Salah

Egypt coach Hossam Hassan dismissed talk of unrest involving talisman Mohamed Salah, insisting there were no issues within the squad as they prepared to face New Zealand in their crucial World Cup Group G match at BC Place on Sunday, reports Reuters from Vancouver.

"Salah is an important player for our squad, and the 26 players who are here with me are very important," Hassan told reporters. "Every player who has worked with me knows I deal with them in a professional manner. I do not have favourites.

"If he starts ... or if he gets substituted, it's fine. It is his role as a player. Everyone knows that I am working for the benefit of the team and the national side."

Dutch monarchs back Curacao

King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima of the Netherlands began Saturday by cheering the Dutch past Sweden in Houston but the monarchs ended the day by watching Curacao make some history against Ecuador, reports AFP from Kansas City.

The small island nation of Curacao is a constituent country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and that makes the couple the heads of state. So, after a quick flight north, the royal pair dutifully swapped out the bright orange scarves of Het Oranje Legioen they wore to their earlier match with bright blue ones for The Blue Wave.

Don't touch Rocky!

France supporters at the World Cup were issued an urgent warning on Saturday to keep their hands off Philadelphia's iconic Rocky Balboa statue after a string of sporting misfortunes befell teams whose fans dared to dress it in their colours, reports Reuters from Philadelphia.

The official France supporters' group has told travelling fans to steer clear of draping Sylvester Stallone's famous fictional boxer in Les Bleus gear, citing Philadelphia sports folklore that has claimed several victims.

A supporters' group released a statement to warn the fans ahead of their next group match against Iraq on Monday.

Iran head coach Amir Ghalenoei blasted US for the poor treatment. AFP

Iran set for travel relief

LOS ANGELES, AFP

Iran coach Amir Ghalenoei said Saturday he has been told that US travel restrictions on his World Cup team will finally be eased for their third group game but blasted the treatment they have received so far for damaging their on-field performance.

Iran, who are at war with co-hosts USA, have been based in Mexico while playing all their games in the USA. That has required frequent cross-border travel, and US authorities have only permitted the team to remain in the country for a few hours after each game, with restrictions frequently shifting last-minute.

Austria in Argentina's way

ARLINGTON (US), REUTERS

Defending champions Argentina can take a major step towards the knockout stage when they face Austria in their second World Cup Group J match on Monday, after both sides opened their campaigns with convincing victories.

Lionel Messi inspired Argentina's title defence with a hat-trick in a 3-0 win over Algeria, drawing level with Germany's Miroslav Klose as the all-time leading scorer in World Cup history while Austria beat Jordan 3-1 to set up a meeting between the group's two early leaders.

A victory would leave Argentina on the brink of the Round of 32 and could secure top spot in the group if Jordan fail to beat Algeria in the day's other Group J match.

Austria arrive with ambitions of their own after an impressive opening performance under coach Ralf Rangnick and can also move into a commanding position in the group if they overcome Argentina and Algeria do not beat Jordan.

Much of the attention will again fall on 38-year-old Messi, whose clinical display against Algeria reinforced Argentina's status as one of the favourites to retain the trophy, a threat Austria captain David Alaba acknowledged after watching his opener.

"We definitely watched their game before we left," the defender said after their opening win. "It's incredible that Messi started such a tournament with a hat trick. Absolutely insane... let's hope he doesn't (do it) next week."

Alaba was quick to stress that Argentina's quality extends well beyond their talisman.

"We know what kind of opponent we're up against, what kind of quality they have in their ranks, even besides Messi, but also what they're capable of as a team," he said.

Austria will hope their organised pressing game can disrupt Argentina's rhythm and strengthen their credentials as potential group winners.

Argentina assistant coach Pablo Aimar warned that Austria would pose a different challenge to Algeria, describing Rangnick's side as a physical team capable of causing problems despite Argentina's impressive start.

Argentina's Lionel Messi is a goal away from surpassing Germany's Miroslav Klose as all-time leading goal-scorer at the FIFA World Cup. AFP

Michael Olise, one of France's star players, during a training session in Waltham ahead of their game against Iraq. AFP

Deschamps to retain France's spine for Iraq encounter

NEW YORK, REUTERS

France are expected to make only minor adjustments rather than wholesale changes when they face Iraq in their second World Cup Group I match on Monday, with coach Didier Deschamps keen to preserve momentum while edging closer to the knockout stages.

Les Bleus opened their campaign with a 3-1 win over Senegal in New York, where Kylian Mbappe scored twice, and another victory in Boston would secure their place in the last 32.

Deschamps has often favoured stability at major tournaments and is unlikely to deviate from that approach despite the depth of talent at his disposal.

France were occasionally vulnerable defensively against Senegal but were in another league after the break and the coach appears reluctant to tamper with the balance of a side who are among the favourites for the title.

The most likely changes are expected on the left flank, with Bradley Barcola set to replace Desire Doue in attack and Lucas Digne in line to come in for Theo Hernandez at left back.

Another adjustment could come in midfield.

Deschamps has held lengthy discussions with Manu Kone in recent days and the 25-year-old was paired with Adrien Rabiot during training this week, suggesting he could be handed a starting role.

Elsewhere, France are expected to retain the spine that impressed against Senegal, with Mbappe leading an attack that also features Michael Olise and Ousmane Dembele.

While qualification remains the immediate objective, the match also offers Deschamps an opportunity to test alternatives ahead of the knockout rounds without disrupting the team's rhythm.

Iraq suffered a 4-1 defeat by Norway in their opening match and need a positive result to keep their hopes of progressing alive.

On Monday

New Zealand vs **Egypt** (6:30 am)
Argentina vs **Austria** (10:30 pm)

On Tuesday

France vs **Iraq** (2:30 am)
Norway vs **Senegal** (5:30 am)

All timings in IST

Saliba in pain

France centre-half William Saliba said Saturday he has been "gritting his teeth" and playing through the pain at the World Cup after suffering from a back problem for the past few months, reports AFP from Waltham.

The defender was a key figure in helping his club Arsenal secure their first Premier League title in 22 years last season, but told reporters that he is not operating at "100 percent" in North America.

Haaland headache for Senegal

NEW YORK, REUTERS

Senegal face a defensive conundrum as they prepare to play Norway and their prolific striker Erling Haaland at the World Cup on Monday.

Captain Kalidou Koulibaly returned from injury for Senegal's opening Group I game against France but was found wanting up against Kylian Mbappe and could be dropped as coach Pape Bouna Thiaw looks to counter the threat of Haaland at the New York/New Jersey Stadium.

Senegal have been touted as Africa's best hope at the World Cup but had their confidence knocked by a 3-1 loss to France in their opening game.

Norway, in contrast, made a winning start in their first World Cup game since 1998, with Haaland netting twice in a 4-1 victory over Iraq in Boston. How best to deal with Haaland will have given Thiaw plenty to ponder, particularly whether to persist with Koulibaly or replace him with 20-year-old Mamadou Sarr.

When Koulibaly was suspended at the African Cup of Nations finals in Morocco, Sarr stepped in and impressed before joining Chelsea. At Stamford Bridge, however, he was usually named among the substitutes and his lack of game time over the last months counted against him when Thiaw finalised the line-up to face France.

The 35-year-old Koulibaly, who has won 104 caps, had played only eight minutes since suffering an injury in training at his Saudi club in April and was well off the pace as Mbappe scored twice to earn France a deserved victory.

A win for Norway would guarantee them progress to the last 32 but their build-up has not been without concerns either. Domestic media criticism of Martin Odegaard's performance against Iraq was batted away by his team-mates in the build-up to the match while coach Stale Solbakken has also said he was not happy with aspects of their performance against Iraq, particularly defence.

Norway, who had a 100 per cent qualification record but won only one of four World Cup warm-up friendlies, have kept a single clean sheet in their last eight matches and will be wary of the threat posed by Senegal forwards Nicolas Jackson and Sadio Mane.

Norway's Erling Haaland scored a brace on his WC debut. REUTERS

Kaashvi Venkat

Karnataka's Kaashvi wears singles crown

BENGALURU, DHNS: Karnataka's Kaashvi Venkat beat Adira Bhagat to emerge as the singles champion of the AITA National Series Under 12 tennis tournament which concluded in Belagavi on Saturday.

In the final, the 10-year-old Kaashvi strolled past second seed Adira of Maharashtra 6-2, 6-0 to capture her maiden National Series title. Earlier in the semi-final, Kaashvi defeated third seed Dhanishka Mahanta of Assam 6-4, 6-3.

Later in the doubles final, Kaashvi teamed up with Vidula Reddy of Telangana but went down 2-6, 2-6 to Dhanishka Mahanta and Adira Bhagat.

Results (girls' final): Singles: Kaashvi Venkat (Kar) bt Adira Bhagat (Mah) 6-2, 6-0.
Doubles: Dhanishka Mahanta (Asm)/ Adira Bhagat (Mah) bt Kaashvi Venkat (Kar)/ Vidula Reddy (Tel) 6-2, 6-2.

IN BRIEF

Mohak takes Kickstart into the final

▶ Mohak M Mani struck the all-important winner as Kickstart FC edged South United FC 1-0 in the semi-final of the KSFA Youth Premier League U-20 at the Bangalore Football Stadium on Sunday, reports DHNS.

HAL SC joined them in the final after prevailing over Roots FC in a penalty shootout 3-2.

Results: Semifinals: Kickstart FC: 1 (Mohak M Mani 39th) bt South United FC: 0; HAL SC: 1 (Gasper Anthony 30th) bt Roots FC: 1 (Khaleel Ur Rehaman 45+1st) via penalty shootout 3-2.

India-Ireland series on Sony

▶ Sony Pictures Networks India (SPNI) has acquired the exclusive television and digital media rights for India's tour of Ireland in 2026, reports DHNS.

Shreyas Iyer will make his T20I captaincy debut during the two-match series, which will be played in Belfast on June 26 and 28.

Sanju strikes in Ronaldo FC win

BENGALURU, DHNS: Sanju Kumar S scored a 12th-minute winner as Ronaldo FC Bangalore edged out Raman Sports FA 1-0 in the North Zone semifinals of KSFA C Division League Championships at the Bangalore Football Stadium on Sunday.

LOCAL FOOTBALL

Results (semifinals): North Zone: Ronaldo FC Bangalore: 1 (Sanju Kumar S 12th) bt Raman Sports FA: 0; Alchemy International FA: 3 (Aayush Kolte 18th, Thangjam Digbijoy Singh 31st, Thounajam Bikesh Singh 47th) bt Play 365: 0. **South Zone:** Bangalore Champs Academy: 3 (Deepak 16th, Mohammed Aathif 19th, Loga Subramani 43rd) bt Blues FA: 0; Blues Star FC: 1 (Nishanth JD 52nd) bt BM FC: 0.

◆ ON TV ◆

FOOTBALL

World Cup: New Zealand vs Egypt **(6:30 am)**, Argentina vs Austria **(10:30 pm)**, France vs Iraq **(2:30 am, Tuesday)**, Norway vs Senegal **(5:30 am, Tuesday)**. **LIVE** on **Unite8 Sports, Zee5.**

CRICKET

Maharaja Trophy: Mysore Warriors vs Hubli Tigers **(2:30 pm)**, Gulbarga Mystics vs Coastal Kings Mangaluru **(7 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Sony Sports Network.**

CRICKET WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

Kapp makes India pay dearly

South African smashes unbeaten 81 in 6-wicket win

MANCHESTER, PTI

Marizanne Kapp made the most of a couple of dropped catches to hit an unbeaten 81 and power South Africa's crucial six-wicket win over India in their Group A contest of the Women's T20 World Cup here on Sunday.

Kapp, who had earlier returned 2/27 with the ball, struck seven fours and four sixes to make her runs off just 45 balls. She was dropped twice by substitute fielder Radha Yadav, which proved catastrophic for India.

In reply to India's laborious 158 for seven earlier in the innings, South Africa won with five balls to spare, making 161 for four in 19.1 overs.

Kapp put on 97 runs for the third wicket with Tazmin Brits (40 off 36 balls), which laid the foundation for an impressive win for the Proteas, which also took them to the third position in the points table behind second-placed India and table-toppers Australia.

Harmanpreet opened with Shafali Verma and kept changing the bowling frequently and the Indian challenge was met by some stoic response from the South African openers, who did not take the early initiative of attacking.

It resulted in the Proteas reaching 25 for no loss after the fifth over, and a double-wicket maiden from Shree Charani (3/24) wrecked their start by the end of the Powerplay.

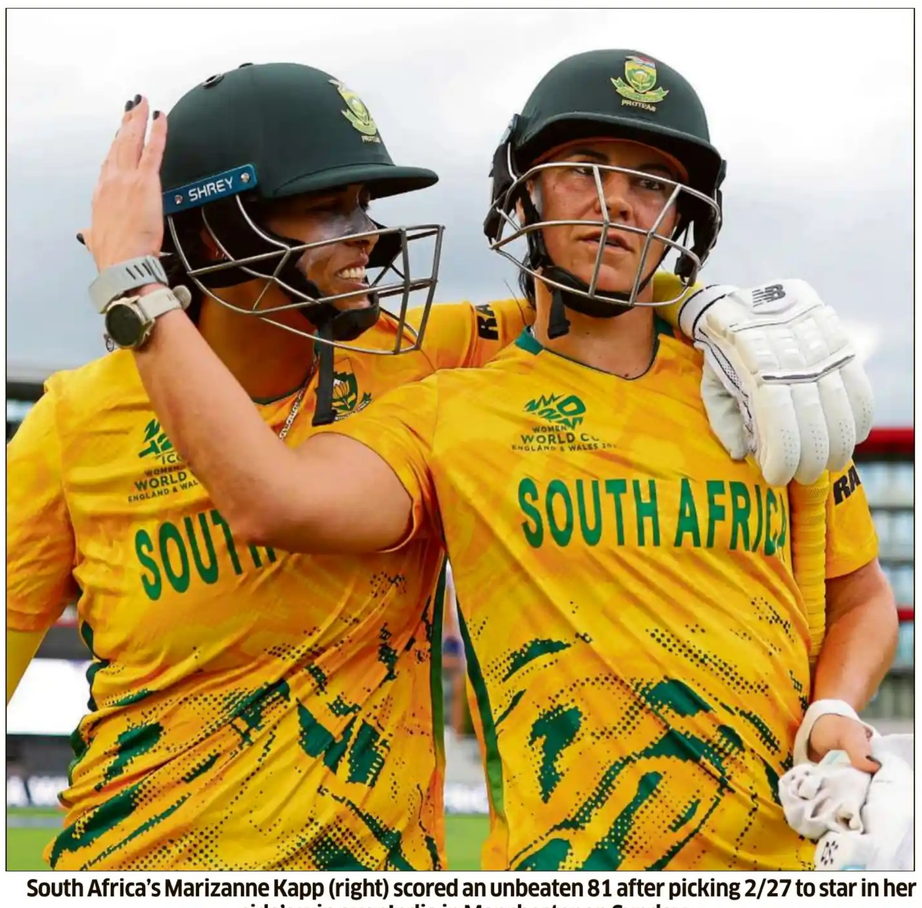
Charani first timed her jump to perfection to grab a sharp catch over her head to remove the dangerous Laura Wolvaardt (20), and then cleaned up Annerie Dercksen (0) two balls later.

But South Africa fought their way back to controlling the game with the superb stand between Kapp and Brits, consuming only 63 balls to do so.

The pair ran extremely well between wickets and kept finding the odd boundary every over to keep their team in the hunt. But a slow start meant they had to be a tad more aggressive than they were.

The partnership between Brits and Kapp would not have swelled to the extent that it did if Radha Yadav had not spilt a regulation catch coming in from long-on, giving the latter a lifeline.

The association ended when Brits connected well but found Charani at deep backward square in the 17th over off Shafali, who would have got her second wicket in the same over had Radha not dropped another regulation chance.



South Africa's Marizanne Kapp (right) scored an unbeaten 81 after picking 2/27 to star in her side's win over India in Manchester on Sunday. X

SCOREBOARD

INDIA		SOUTH AFRICA	
Mandhana b Kapp	17	Wolvaardt c&b Charani	20
Shafali c Jafta b Ismail	31	Brits c Charani b Shafali	40
Bhatia lbw Khaka	15	Dercksen b Charani	0
Rodrigues c&b de Klerk	12	Kapp (not out)	81
Harmanpreet b Ismail	24	De Klerk b Charani	5
Deepti c Kapp b Mlaba	29	Tryon (not out)	10
Richa c Khaka b Kapp	15	Extras (LB-4, W-1)	5
Arundhati (not out)	6	**TOTAL (for 4 wkts, 19.1 overs)**	**161**
Prema (not out)	3		
Extras (W-6)	6		
TOTAL (for 7 wkts, 20 overs)	**158**		

Fall of wickets: 1-30, 2-54, 3-67, 4-83, 5-116, 6-137, 7-153.

Bowling: Marizanne Kapp 4-0-27-2, Shabnim Ismail 4-0-28-2, Chloe Tryon 2-0-23-0, Nonkululeko Mlaba 4-0-33-1, Ayabonga Khaka 4-0-31-1, Nadine de Klerk 2-0-16-1.

Fall of wickets: 1-25, 2-25, 3-122, 4-137. **Bowling:** Shafali Varma 4-0-22-1, Nandani Sharma 2.1-0-17-0, Arundhati Reddy 3-0-29-0, Shree Charani 4-1-24-3, Prema Rawat 2-0-21-0, Deepti Sharma 4-0-44-0.
Result: South Africa won by 6 wkts.
PoM: Marizanne Kapp.
India's next match: Vs Bangladesh (June 25, Manchester)

Ruthless Soorya puts Lanka A to the sword in final

Opener's 11-ball 50 is the fastest in List A cricket

DAMBULLA, PTI

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi showcased his astonishing talent and big-match temperament with a 29-ball 94, laying the foundation for India A's lopsided 66-run over Sri Lanka A in the tri-series final here on Sunday.

Sooryavanshi's romp, which also contained an 11-ball 50, the fastest in List A cricket, guided India A to a massive 377 for nine.

Sri Lanka A mustered 311 all out in reply as pacer Yash Thakur (3/45) and spinner Vipraj Nigam (3/60) inflicted timely blows.

If the hosts had to get closer to that improbable target, they needed a good start and consistent partnerships.

They did not have either of them. Their top three - Niroshan Dickwella, Avishka Fernando and Nuwanidu Fernando - returned to the hut with just 75 on board inside the first 10 overs.

Two of the most productive partnerships in their innings was a 53 between Sadeera Samarawickrama (52) and skipper Sahan Arachchige (38) for the fourth wicket, and then a 77 between Wanuj Sahan (62) and Vijayakanth Viyaskanth (39) for the seventh wicket.

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi smashed a 29-ball 94 in India A's win. PTI FILE PHOTO

Those numbers were vastly insufficient in a chase that demanded a scoring rate in excess of eight constantly, and were good enough only to delay the inevitable and help SL to cross the 300-run mark.

Earlier, Sooryavanshi's blitz too had an air of inevitability to it, as he shrugged off a lean run in this tournament with typical gusto.

Asked to bat, India A looked set for a score in excess of 400 riding on Sooryavanshi's extraordinary blitz before SL clawed their way back.

Brief scores: India A: 377/9 in 50 overs (Priyansh Ayra 39, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi 94, Ruturaj Gaikwad 40, Tilak Varma 67, Kumar Kushagra 36, Vipraj Nigam 27, Anukul Roy 39; Kugathas Mathulan 2-82, Ravindu Fernando 2-72) bt Sri Lanka A: Niroshan Dickwella 25, Sadeera Samarawickrama 52, Sahan Arachchige 38, Wanuja Sahan 62, Vijayakanth Viyaskanth 39; Yash Thakur 3-45, Vipraj Nigam 3-60, Anukul Roy 2-42). **Result:** India A won by 66 runs. **PoM:** Vaibhav Sooryavanshi.

Change in length is Prasidh's trick

VIGNESH BHARADWAJ
CHENNAI, DHNS

It is true that fast bowling, to a certain extent, is dependent on ground conditions such as the type of soil used to prepare the wicket, the amount of grass trimmed off the surface, the cracks, and the weather. However, the real skill of a fast bowler lies in handling those conditions and exploiting them with a ball in hand.

On Saturday, Prasidh Krishna received a warm applause as he walked off with a maiden ODI five-wicket haul, the match ball in hand, and a smile, and you just knew something had clicked.

Most tall and lanky quicks like Prasidh tend to hit the deck hard, operate in the back of a good length area and go in search of the awkward bounce that troubles batters.

What the Karnataka quick did differently during his first spell on a lively, red-soil MA Chidambaram Stadium wicket was to spot the right length from where the chances of finding an edge were higher, and consistently kept hitting it, something Prasidh has struggled with.

Prasidh, with a 6'3" frame and a high release point, pushed his length a little fuller than usual, extracted bounce and pocketed the top four Afghanistan batters in the blink of an eye.

Prasidh Krishna's success in the Afghanistan ODI series augurs well for the Indian team, especially with the World Cup scheduled next year. PTI

While he operated with the new ball, something Prasidh has not done often in Indian colours, the 30-year-old settled into a nice rhythm, drew the batsmen forward, tempted them to drive and induced edges.

Within 40 minutes, Prasidh had ripped the heart out of Afghanistan's batting in a spell that read: 5-2-6-4, which was the second-best figures for India in the first 10 overs of an innings in ODIs.

"The work's been going on for quite some time now (on trying to pitch the ball a little fuller). We've been working on lengths, be it whatever format I'm playing. Morne (Morkel) has been in my ears for quite some time, and I'm happy to be bowling well," Prasidh said after picking his career-best ODI figures.

While assessing conditions is only one part of the job, delivering is another. However, it didn't take long for Prasidh to find his length, as he had Rahmanullah Gurbaz poking at a ball he could not have left alone.

The next two of his wickets were also of a similar kind, where batters were unsure whether to play or let it go. While the plan sounds simple, the execution requires a vital component: Control.

"Initially, there was good bounce in the wicket. There are different lengths on different wickets that you have to bowl. On a wicket like this (Chennai, red-soil), maybe you have to be a little bit further. We all saw the kind of ability that he (Prasidh) has. If he can hit those areas, the kind of opportunities he can create for us, and if he can keep doing that, that would be good," Shubman Gill said at the post-match press conference.

Gill, who also leads Prasidh at Gujarat Titans, urged the Karnataka quick to be flexible with strategies and planning.

"It's about being flexible, there is not a certain role. He (Prasidh) is going to bowl with the new ball or can bowl first change. We spoke about giving short spells to bowlers and tell them to bowl their heart out."

For someone who has missed a good amount of cricket due to injuries and inconsistency, this was Prasidh not showcasing his calibre; it was Prasidh handing India a reassurance of his talent.

Kohli picked for England tour but subject to fitness

NEW DELHI, PTI: Star batter Virat Kohli was on Sunday named in India's squad for the three-match ODI series against England next month, subject to fitness clearance, as the BCCI announced a 15-man squad for the upcoming white-ball assignment.

Kohli, who is in Delhi for a promotional event, will report to the Centre of Excellence (CoE) in Bengaluru on Monday for a fitness test.

He had suffered a hamstring injury during Royal Challengers Bengaluru's title-defending run in Indian Premier League. The injury had ruled him out of the recent three-match ODI series against Afghanistan.

CoE sports science staff had visited Kohli in England some time back to check on his recovery.

The Shubman Gill led ODI team didn't have any surprises except that young batter Yashasvi Jaiswal has been dropped after being a part of short Afghanistan series.

Jaiswal wasn't picked as he was replacement for Kohli in the Afghanistan series.

The common practice followed by selection committee is that replacement player will have to make his way once the first choice cricketer out with injury makes a comeback.

Virat Kohli

"Against England, there won't be much experiment with top order. Virat comes back at No.3 and Gill will open with Rohit Sharma. For back up opener's slot, selectors have Ishan Kishan who can be used as a floater," a BCCI source privy to selection matters told PTI.

India squads: For England (ODI): Shubman Gill (captain), Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli*, Shreyas Iyer (Vice-Captain), KL Rahul (WK), Ishan Kishan (WK), Washington Sundar, Axar Patel, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Kuldeep Yadav, Jasprit Bumrah, Prasidh Krishna, Harshit Rana, Arshdeep Singh, Gurnoor Brar.
For Ireland (T20Is): Shreyas Iyer (captain), Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson (WK), Ishan Kishan (WK), Shivam Dube, Tilak Varma (Vice-Captain), Nitish Kumar Reddy, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Ravi Bishnoi, Harshit Rana, Arshdeep Singh, Prince Yadav, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, Prasidh Krishna.

NZ's Henry rips through Eng to level series

LONDON, AFP: Matt Henry took four wickets for no runs in just 12 balls as New Zealand thrashed England by 253 runs in the second Test at the Oval on Sunday for a series-levelling win.

New Zealand only needed 48 minutes on the fifth day to complete a crushing victory as England, set a mammoth 463 to win, were bowled out for 209, with Henry's six-wicket haul in total in the second innings giving him superb match figures of 11/109.

New Zealand dominated England in all aspects at the Oval, with both Glenn Phillips and Henry Nicholls, replacing retired great Kane Williamson, hitting hundreds as they bounced back from a 115-run defeat at Lord's to level this three-match contest at 1-1.

England made five changes to their side.

Brief scores: New Zealand: 391 & 362 all out bt England: 291 & (O/n: 182/5): 209 all out in 58.1 overs (Joe Root 77, Harry Brook 58, Jordan Cox 25; Matt Henry 6-29, Kyle Jamieson 3-61). **Result:** NZ won by 253 runs. **Series:** NZ level three-match series 1-1.
PoM: Matt Henry.

Marsh powers Aus sweep over Bangla

CHITTAGONG, AFP: Mitchell Marsh smashed 60 off 28 balls as Australia completed a 3-0 T20 series sweep over Bangladesh on Sunday, to win by seven wickets here on Sunday.

Australia had already wrapped up the series after winning the first two matches and made light work of the hosts, chasing a modest target of 110 in just 11 overs.

Marsh, the captain, continued the assault, bringing up his 14th T20 half-century off just 23 balls, before Shoriful Islam removed him for 60.

Brief scores: Bangladesh: 109/8 in 20 overs (Towhid Hridoy 61; Spencer Johnson 2-6, Nathan Ellis 2-21, Adam Zampa 2-22) bt Australia: 112/3 in 11 overs (Mitchell Marsh 60). **Result:** Australia won by 7 wkts. Series: Aus win three-match series 3-0. **PoM:** Mitchell Marsh. **PoS:** Matt Renshaw.

Sneha & team sprint to 4x100m gold at Asian Relays

BENGALURU, DHNS: Karnataka sprinter Sneha SS, along with the rest of the Indian runners, claimed a gold medal in the women's 4x100m final at the Asian Relays Championships in Shangyu, China on Sunday.

The quartet of Sneha, Srabani Nanda, Sudheshna Shivankar and Tamanna clocked India's season best timing of 43.85 seconds to the gold, leaving China (44.09) and Thailand (44.11) in the trail. The Indian quartet also surpassed the Asian Relays record of 44.16 seconds.

Sneha, who ran the second leg of the race, recovered from her disheartening show during the mixed 4x100m final the other day when she conceded the lead to Thailand and China while running the anchor leg of the race.

Meanwhile, Karnataka's Theerthesh P Shetty and Poovamma MR, who ran to mixed 4x400m relay silver the other day, couldn't medal in the men's and women's relays finals in the category respectively.

The men's team — including Suraj A Raja, Avinash Kumar and Bharath Sridhar — finished fifth at 3:05.33 while Vietnam (3:02.60), China (3:03.23) and Sri Lanka (3:03.33) took the medal spots by a margin.

The women's 4x400m team — including Kumari Saloni, Ansa Babu and Rashdeep Kaur — finished right outside medal position at fourth place (3:34.88) behind Vietnam (3:31.16), China (3:32.68) and Kazakhstan (3:33.87).

Athletics Federation of India rested their best men's quartermilers for the event.

'Portugal players failed to back Ronaldo'

ADITYA K HALDER
BENGALURU, DHNS

Croatian Igor Stimac and his half-decade tenure as the Indian football team head coach saw several ups and downs. However, his off-the-field skills as TV pundit also stood out as his deep knowledge about the game was appreciated, while he accurately predicted all four semifinalists during the FIFA World Cup 2022, which also included Morocco.

The 58-year-old Croat returned to India for another stint as TV pundit on Zee5 and Unite8 Sports, the official broadcasters for the World Cup. *DH* caught up with Stimac for an exclusive conversation on varied topics, including Cristiano Ronaldo's troubles early on in the group stages. Excerpts below...

Igor Stimac

At the 2022 World Cup, you made some impressive predictions during the knockout stages. Do you have any predictions this time?
I would rather wait until after the second round of group stage matches before making any serious predictions. It is clear that some of the major teams are facing problems at the moment, but it is still too early to make firm conclusions. Based on what we have seen so far, teams like Croatia, Portugal and Spain could find themselves in trouble if their performances do not improve.

Talking about Portugal, a lot of the focus is naturally on Ronaldo. What did you make of his performance?
Cristiano Ronaldo should not be the one facing criticism. He needs better service and much greater support from his team-mates. As the captain and leader, he carries responsibility but Portugal should be playing to his strengths because he is their centre-forward. Imagine having a striker like Sunil Chhetri and the rest of the team failing to do their jobs. How is he supposed to score goals without receiving quality service? Portugal, as a team, delivered a poor performance. People are focusing on Ronaldo because several other star strikers scored in the opening round while he did not.

Speaking of star strikers, what did you make of Lionel Messi and Argentina's performance against Algeria?
At 38 years of age, scoring a hat-trick at a World Cup is something truly extraordinary. Regardless of the opposition, that is a remarkable achievement. .

Where will you put Kylian Mbappe and France?
France have the strongest squad in the tournament when you assess them position by position and consider the depth available to them. They could comfortably field three different starting elevens, and each of those teams would be capable of competing for medals.

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